

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



133 552

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

THE QUEST FOR
RELIGIOUS REALISM

THE MENDENHALL LECTURES
SEVENTEENTH SERIES
DELIVERED AT
DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

By the Same Author

DO WE NEED A NEW RELIGION?

HIGHER EDUCATION FACES THE FUTURE

COMMEMORATIVE ESSAYS: 1859-1929

KANT'S PRE-CRITICAL ETHICS

THE QUEST FOR
RELIGIOUS REALISM
SOME PARADOXES OF RELIGION

BY

PAUL ARTHUR SCHILPP

Northwestern University



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1938

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

*Copyright, 1938, by Harper & Brothers
Printed in the United States of America*

FIRST EDITION

D-N

All rights in this book are reserved.

*No part of the text may be reproduced in any
manner whatsoever without written permission.*

For information address

Harper & Brothers

To
My Friends
TULLY CLEON KNOLES
and
GARFIELD BROMLEY OXNAM
Educators
Whose religious convictions and
teachings are in the best sense
realistic

*All mortals equally unequal are
To reach the goal the living Ideal sets
Before each as a star. Heed; follow it
Forever where it leads, searching all zones
Through Beauty's gracious Being to its Source.
Forever is that Ideal but a guide,
And never is it as pure passion quite
Possessed. As Heaven's guidance when despised
Ceases to lead, and leaves the follower,
Who once in faith had followed it, alone,
Each wanderer forlorn must, unled, fail
To find the way to God, except through Faith
In something more and nobler than himself.*

From *Lovers of Life* by EDWARDS DAVIS

CONTENTS

PREFACE	xiii
BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION	i
I. CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED AND DEEPLY COMMITTED?	5
II. CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD" WITHOUT "LOSING OUR SOUL"?	40
III. CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?	71
IV. CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?	97
V. CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?	131
VI. CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND <i>Our</i> GOD?	165
INDEX	193

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE author wishes to express his appreciation to the following authors and publishers for permission to quote from their copyrighted works:

Abingdon Press, *Christ's Alternative to Communism*, by E. Stanley Jones, copyright 1935; and *A Faith for Today*, by Harris Franklin Rall, copyright 1936.

Harcourt, Brace & Company, *God's Gold*, by John T. Flynn, copyright 1932.

Henry Holt & Company, *Out of My Life and Thought*, by Albert Schweitzer, copyright 1933; and *Re-Thinking Religion*, by A. E. Avey, copyright 1936.

Edwin Markham, "Outwitted" from *The Shoes of Happiness and Other Poems*, copyrighted by the author and reprinted by his permission.

Open Court Publishing Company, *The Vocation of Man*, by Johann G. Fichte, tr. by William Smith, copyright 1925.

PREFACE

THIS volume constitutes the *Mendenhall Lectures* delivered at DePauw University in February, 1938. It is a real pleasure to have this opportunity of expressing to President Clyde E. Wildman and the members of his faculty and student body at DePauw my most heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation of the warm and enthusiastic welcome with which they received the lectures and of the cordial hospitality with which they treated the lecturer. Thanks to their friendly spirit, the week spent on the DePauw campus will long and pleasantly live in my memory.

There may be readers of these pages who feel that the subtitle expresses more accurately the nature of the contents of this book than does the title itself. To them a word of explanation may be in order. Confronted by the paradoxes, the author has been sent forth upon a quest. On this quest he has been moved by the desire to be utterly realistic in facing, in the spirit of ethical religion, some of the bewildering problems of our day. Even though the phrase "Religious Realism" is not to be taken in a technically philosophical sense, it would seem justifiable as describing the basic attitude in which the issues under consideration have been treated.

PREFACE

The book is dedicated to two of my friends whose religious convictions and teachings, as I have said in the dedication, "are in the best sense realistic," *President Tully Cleon Knoles* of the College of the Pacific and *Bishop Garfield Bromley Oxnam* of the Methodist Episcopal Church. To both men I owe a debt of gratitude which I shall never be able to repay. For twelve years I had the privilege of working on the faculty of the College of the Pacific under the constantly inspiring leadership of President Knoles. During those years he proved himself to be far more than a president; he became a friend whose friendship has meant more to me than I can express in words. Bishop Oxnam, before the Methodist Church drafted him for the bishopric, was President of DePauw University, in which capacity he invited me to be the Mendenhall lecturer for 1937-1938. We had become warm friends before Dr. Oxnam left the Pacific coast. I am happy to say that the intervening years have seen a strengthening of those bonds. Strangely enough, there was a time, not so many years ago, when Bishop Oxnam was a student of Dr. Knoles, when the latter was Professor of History at the University of Southern California. Thus their names are most fittingly linked once again. I need, however, append a note of warning to the reader. Neither President Knoles nor Bishop Oxnam must be held responsible for anything which appears in these chapters. Neither friend

PREFACE

has seen one sentence of the book; consequently, it would hardly be fair to impute to either of them any of the ideas here set forth.

I also rejoice in being able at last to express my very great spiritual obligation to a dear friend who, though he is no longer with us, has rendered and will continue to render a service to me which is quite beyond expression. Just two years before his death I had the privilege of meeting and for a year at least of having frequent personal contacts with *Mr. Edwards Davis*, one of God's noblemen and one of humanity's most profitable servants. In his great poem, *Lovers of Life*, Mr. Davis has made a deep and rich contribution to my spiritual life, a debt whose extent I wish I might have had the opportunity to acknowledge publicly before Mr. Davis' departure. As it is, I am most grateful to Mrs. Elvina Davis for her kind and enthusiastic permission to use throughout this book selections from her husband's great dramatic poem. I am confident that, whatever I may or may not have succeeded in saying in the following pages, the work has been infinitely enriched by the gems from Mr. Davis' pen and heart. I can only hope that these brief excerpts will send many a reader to *Lovers of Life* itself. To read that book is an unforgettable experience.

My gratitude is also due to the editor of *The Personalist* for his kind permission to use, in Chapter VI,

PREFACE

a large part of an article from my pen which first appeared in its columns. Other obligations for permission to quote from sources are acknowledged in place.

I know that it would be impossible to enumerate all the sources of intellectual clarification or of spiritual insight which have helped to shape my thought. Their identity and even their number is beyond my power of estimation. One cannot live in the constant company of scholars and of books without being everlastingly influenced by such happy contacts. At the same time, the ultimate responsibility for the actually expressed ideas of any author must be shouldered by himself. I have no desire to shirk this duty.

It only remains to express my genuine thanks for aid in the final preparation of this manuscript to my esteemed colleague, Professor John W. Spargo, and to my former student and long-time friend, Mr. Robert W. Browning, assistant in philosophy; also to the Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, Professor Delton T. Howard, for his cordial and unfailing encouragement and for his great kindness in having made available some of the limited funds of the department for the cost of typing this manuscript. To Harper & Brothers, Publishers, and more particularly to Mr. Eugene Exman, their religious editor, thanks are due for their splendid spirit of helpfulness and coöperation.

If the book will receive anything like the excited re-

P R E F A C E

ception from the reading public which the delivered lectures received from the DePauw student body and faculty, it will more than accomplish its intended function.

P. A. S.

Department of Philosophy
Northwestern University
February 21, 1938

*THE QUEST FOR
RELIGIOUS REALISM*

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

*Religions all are measured by their deeds;
When they have ceased to profit us, they die.*

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

THE pages of the following chapters should be read against the background of two major considerations which have come to weigh increasingly heavily upon the mind of the author.

First of all, one can but be frankly stunned by the course of world events during, let us say, the past quarter century. The outbreak of the World War in those fatal summer days of 1914 seems to have blasted the fond dream of the early years of this century, the vision of a rationally evolving humanity, which was soon to have banished war, crime, disease, and misery—not to say sin—for ever from our fair earth. How far away that dream now seems! How unrealistic it must have been! Were we fools, living in a fool's paradise? How devastating have been the blows which ever since have fallen with increasing suddenness and tempo and with the staccato sound of a machine gun! The Russian Revolution! Versailles! The occupation of the Ruhr! The German inflation! The March on Rome! That fateful day of October, 1929! The world-wide depression! The millions of unemployed! The ever clearer recognition

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

of the fact that a host of men will never again be assured of permanent employment! The invasion of Shanghai! The robbery of Manchuria and of Jehol! The arrival of Hitler! The rearming of Germany! The assassination of Dollfuss! Ethiopia! The persecution of the Jews! The Spanish imbroglio! The steady retreat of the League of Nations! The abdication of a British king! Japan over China! The United States joining in the world's armament race! All this, while every nation avows its peaceful intentions and its deep-felt and sympathetic interest in all its neighbors, near or far! Is there anything significant, one can say, in such a world?

The other matter which weighs almost equally as heavily upon one's mind is the question: What can religion say to and do about such a world? This question becomes all the more burning when one remembers that it was so-called Christian nations which started the conflagration in 1914; that they were, at any rate nominally, Christian statesmen who contrived the Treaty of Versailles, who caused the occupation of the Ruhr, who stole Ethiopia, who are persecuting the Jews and who are trying to foist an unwanted government upon Spain. Nor can one forget that, with Christianity in the world for nearly nineteen centuries, with religion in the world since man has known himself as man, neither religion in general nor Christianity in particular has been able to stop the events of this past quarter century. It is just

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

as difficult to forget, moreover, that the most brutal wars of history have been religious wars and that the most heinous tortures have been perpetrated on men in the name of religion—yes, in the name of the so-called “Prince of Peace!” In view of such facts—and indisputable facts these are!—can religion possibly have anything of significance to say to such an age, to such a world as this? Even granted that religion might think that it has a vitally needed message to our contemporary world, has it a chance to be heard or even the right to speak? Is there anything in religion, in our Christian religion, which will make it possible for us to be as realistic about anything in the world as is the worst muckraker and which yet will not permit us to give up in utter hopelessness or to surrender to the spirit of defeat?

It may go without saying that the author could not have written these chapters, if he did not harbor a strong affirmative conviction in answer to the last question. None the less, it is in order to call the reader's attention in advance to the fact that, in harmony with the spirit of realism which pervades these discussions, we shall pay more attention to individual and social facts than to religious fads, more to real human forces than to pious fancies, more to actual practice than to boasted piety, more to the spirit of religion than to its supernatural spells, more to man's cries than to re-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

ligious creeds, more to deeds than to dogmas, more to persons than to purse strings, and more to people than to power.

No claim is laid to novelty. One can, however, but feel tremendously the importance—in such a day as this—of facing the realities of life and religion with all the candor and honesty of which one may be capable. To this exciting, but also dangerous, adventure the reader is invited.

I

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED AND DEEPLY COMMITTED?

*There are as many ways to the abode
Of God as there are souls upon the quest.*

- Be not afraid. Your effort shall not fail.
Do that which you would do if you were God.
Relate your own experience. Reveal
Yourself, and make that revelation plain.
Be not obscure in thought or word or deed.*
- *Translate your life into a language all*
 - *May understand, and understanding, speak.*

*He shall behold all things revealed, who dares
To be a nobler Being than he is*

From Lovers of Life, by Edwards Davis

A FEW things should be said at the outset about the paradoxes which make up the titles of these chapters. First of all, I did not concoct them, and, in a genuine sense, I did not choose them. Like major factors in the present world situation, I found myself confronted by them. As a thinking person, I had to take them into reckoning. There is no necessity, however, to allow the paradoxical character of these problems to constitute a special source of worry for you. Life is full of paradoxes and, if we can trust the records, it is doubtful whether

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

any teacher was ever more aware of the multiplicity of life's paradoxes than was the humble Galilean. Let us not think for a moment that Jesus created those paradoxes or invented them. He was such a shrewd observer of human nature that the paradoxical character of life and existence simply could not escape him. "Many that are the first shall be last; and the last shall be first." "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." "He who shall seek his life shall lose it; but he who will lose his life, for my sake [for the sake of a great overmastering cause], shall find it."

Although the paradoxical character of our problems was not a matter of choice, the specific order of their discussion has been deliberately adopted. The question Can we be at once open-minded and deeply committed? has been set first because, unless I am mistaken, this issue is basic to a consideration of the others. The reason for this assertion is simple enough. Open-mindedness is a matter of fundamental attitude; it is a basic *Einstellung*, as the Germans would say, which characterizes one's way of looking at and dealing with problems and data. As such it is either present or absent in our reaction to any specific situation. No one can give a reasonable hearing to a discussion of some of the burning questions and most perplexing issues of contemporary life without being first of all inwardly disposed to listen, to look at facts presented and to weigh

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

arguments adduced. In other words, if I hope to carry conviction in the discussion of some of these issues, I must be allowed to speak to minds which, to a reasonable degree at least, are still open. (Note the appearance of our paradox in this very sentence: I want to speak to open minds *in order* to carry conviction!)

Average persons confronted with this demand for open-mindedness are likely to react in any one of three ways. One says: Of course, we must be open-minded; this is so self-evident that, if we did not intend to be thus, we would not be giving these ideas a hearing. Others, though perhaps not exactly taking open-mindedness for granted, feel like saying: This demand for open-mindedness is both justified and easily met. Still others, undoubtedly, will want to raise the question: What does open-mindedness have to do with religion anyway?

In answer to the first objection, let it be said that open-mindedness is never self-evident. No matter how much men may sing the praises of open-mindedness, it cannot be taken for granted. The fact that one is reading a book on any given subject is in itself no guarantee of his being open-minded in that field. It may merely prove that one is anxious to confirm his prejudices, to satisfy his curiosity or to keep himself amused. Open-mindedness, obviously, is something else again. In fact—and this may also serve as reply to the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

second objection raised—there is nothing either easy or even natural about open-mindedness; certainly not so far as the adult mind is concerned. The adult mind is so filled with facts, events, experiences, prejudices, beliefs, hopes and aspirations that open-mindedness as a merely natural reaction is practically out of the realm of possibility. The average mature person approaches any problem, discussion or event with certain predilections, preferences, points of view. Nor, in the nature of the case, can he do otherwise. His past experience has taught him whatever it is that it has taught him. He can no more rid himself of those lessons than he can jump out of his skin. It is, for example, absurd even to assume that the scientist does, or ever can, approach any scientific experiment with his mind wholly "open." He may be quite willing to be taught by whatever the result of the experiment may be; but he approaches the experiment itself with all the background of his scientific knowledge and therefore with a fairly definite attitude. Even as to the likely result of the experiment, he harbors most probably some advance hypothesis or a series of hypotheses. If this is true of the scientist, it is—*mutatis mutandis*—certainly the more true of each of us.

The drift of this discussion has already brought out what appears to be a definite misconception concerning the nature of open-mindedness. No one making a seri-

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

ous argument for this much-needed virtue has ever meant by it a blank mind! No matter how blank the mind of a newly born babe may be, the mind of any, however untutored, adult person is most certainly not blank. After all, no one wants an empty mind to approach anything. By genuine open-mindedness, in other words, we do not refer to the kind of mind which, figuratively speaking, is open at both ends with nothing in between to stop any thought that might perchance pass through. We mean by it neither the kind of mind which changes, like a weather vane, with each new wind of doctrine that blows, nor that kind typified by the traditional legendary donkey which died of starvation midway between two perfectly good haystacks because he could never make up his mind to which one he had better go.

Rather, by open-mindedness we mean a mind which, despite the variety of its experiential ballast, is still not so settled in its grooves, nor determined in its directions, that new evidence can no longer make any difference. The negative statement is more descriptive here than the positive; by an open mind we simply mean a mind that is not closed. We mean a mind hospitable to the presentation of a new idea and to the examination of any notion, even though it may go counter to one's preconceptions. This kind of open-mindedness can be

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

achieved; but it is far from my intention to assert that its achievement is easy.

We come most definitely to grips with our problem when we engage the third objection raised above. The objection, it may be recalled, inquired of us: What does open-mindedness have to do with religion anyway? This demand is as significant in what it reveals as in what it asks. I have, of course, not the least intention of limiting the importance of open-mindedness to religion. The fact that it is held to have no significance for religion whatsoever is, none the less, highly revealing. It reveals the notion that open-mindedness, whereas it is to be acclaimed as a virtue in most other fields, is somehow felt to be out of place in religion and, I may add, in the area of national loyalty. In other words, no matter how ready we may be to acknowledge open-mindedness as a splendid virtue in general, most of us are unwilling to accept it as such when reference is made to religion or patriotism. Here, whether the admission gives us any comfort or not, most of us seem to consider closed-mindedness as virtuous.

Is such an attitude any more justifiable in these highly emotional fields than anywhere else? Or may it not be just as dangerous to the progress of vital religion and to the onward march of the nation as it is to progress, say, in the spheres of medicine or applied science? In most other realms certainly we seem to admit that

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

closed-mindedness is even worse than narrow-mindedness, and this latter, surely, is bad enough! Why, then, do we so completely reverse our attitude when it comes to religion and patriotism?

Before undertaking to answer this specific question we might remind ourselves that perhaps in no field has open-mindedness been realized to the extent that may have been claimed. Perhaps we have been singing its praises so much because it has been actually practiced so little. Academicians, for example, one would imagine of all people to be the most nearly open-minded. Is not their very profession—irrespective of their particular academic subject—the search for truth? If so, has not one the right to expect that they would be eager to extend the most cordial welcome to Dame Truth no matter from whence she might come or in what garments she might be attired? Yet one cannot move for long in academic circles without becoming sadly disillusioned in this respect. One will not easily find any professional group which moves in more definitely marked grooves and which is less easily pried out of them than our academicians. In some ways they seem to be the most unimaginative of groups! If truth does not happen to make her appearance in the time-honored and accepted academic garments, not more than one academician in a hundred, let us say, can conceive that truth may possibly be thus hidden in new and un-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

conventional attire. Besides, truth must be properly introduced by the right kind of degrees from approved institutions, else she will be passed by unnoticed. Moreover, probably nowhere except in religion must truth, in order to be acceptable, agree more subserviently with already established and accepted truths than seems to be the case in academic circles. It really is all very confusing, especially to those of us who had thought of academic halls as places of endless search for and cordial hospitality to truth on every subject. Yet, despite such sad admissions, necessary for other areas of man's interests, we must repeat our earlier question: How does it come that in religion and patriotism open-mindedness is still more unwelcome than anywhere else?

The answer to this question is not far to seek. Religion and patriotism are the two spheres in which our deepest, earliest and most lasting commitments are made. Other matters may be unsettled, but love of God and love of country are not debatable. Other issues may be problematical, but patriotism and religion are a dedication, not a problem. Other fields may be open to investigation, but there is nothing to be questioned about the love for one's country or about one's religious convictions. Other realms may be in the arena of intellectual discussion, but religion and patriotism are matters of emotional response to given objects. To question these or even to permit these to be questioned is to

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

raise doubt within the citadel of our being, at points of its most intimate dedications. Such examination is not open-mindedness; it is infidelity or it is treason.

How reasonable this sounds, and how patriotic and pious!

However, before we can allow it to pass with its presumption, we must undertake a brief review of some historic facts within the religious history of the past as well as of the almost immediate present.

It was in pursuance of just such an uncompromising—closed-minded—attitude that the religious leaders of the ancient Hebrews stoned their prophets; that the religious bigots of Athens demanded the death of Socrates for his “corruption of youth”; that a mob of frenzied religionists cried out: “Away with him, crucify him! We will not have this man to rule over us! Crucify him! Give us Barabbas!”; that the church of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance tortured and killed the heretics and reformers; that the same church made a Galileo recant and other scientists to deny what they knew to be the truth; that no church in any age has been willing to be cleansed from within, but has tended to fight every such attempt to the last ditch, thus again and again necessitating the breaking away of leaders and groups who, in the first place, had not the slightest intention of doing so, as in the case of Jesus, Luther, Wesley and their followers.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

If we say to this, "All this happened in the distant past," we need to remind ourselves of a famous "monkey trial" in Tennessee, within the memory of all of us, where once again the closed-mindedness of religious people tried to stand in the way of human progress. Nor dare we forget that there are—in this year of so-called enlightenment, 1938—several states in our own Union wherein the teaching of the fact¹ of biological evolution is still illegal. As if you could deny or do away with a fact by legislating against the teaching of it! We might as well legislate against the teaching of the rotation of the earth on its axis or against its revolution in its orbit around the sun. That would be no more silly—and just as ineffective. It is dangerous business to entrust the determination of scientific truth and falsehood to scientifically ignorant politicians; nor is this danger in the least mitigated—indeed, it is made the more pernicious—by the fact that those politicians may be influenced in their votes either by their own or by their constituency's so-called religious convictions. Scientific facts can be neither established nor destroyed by the counting of senatorial noses or of voters' ballots.

Let it be admitted that the emphasis in religious per-

¹ Note, please, that, whereas I am speaking of biological evolution as "a fact," I am not referring to any *theories* of its explanation as such. The fact itself appears to be indubitable; but, so far as I know, no theory for its explanation has yet been advanced which accounts satisfactorily for all the observed and observable facts.

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

secution is shifting, even as is the means of dealing with the unwelcome heretic. Whereas for several centuries the battle raged over the supposed conflicts between natural science and religion, that particular issue seems today to be practically a dead one. The scene of battle has now shifted to the field of the social sciences. The heretic today is not so much the biological evolutionist as the social, economic, cultural evolutionist. For the most part we are no longer afraid of new discoveries in the physical universe. We are, however, all the more afraid of the discoveries and proposals of the social scientist who does not believe that because the Constitution was good enough in a preindustrial, premachine age, 1787, it is therefore good enough for us today. We no longer worry about the millions of years man may have been on this earth in the past, but we get terribly upset if someone tries to show us a better way of living together on this earth tomorrow. Anyone who proposes basic social, economic, political and international changes is immediately attacked as a subversive character. Subversive, moreover, he is: to the *status quo*. Since when, one must ask, has human progress been achieved by commitment to the *status quo*? Certainly most human progress within historic ken has been initiated by those who refused to stand committed to existing ways of doing things. Cultural life has been carried forward by men who, so far from being afraid

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

to depart from the past and present, have adventurously marched forward into the dark and untrodden unknown; by men of the type of Abraham of old, who "went out not knowing whither he went"; by persons like Jesus, who dared to hurl into the face of his pious listeners the ringing challenge: "Of old it was said . . . but I say unto you."

Has the church, which so proudly and yet also so often ignominiously has borne the name of that great Galilean revolutionary, dared to learn that lesson? How happy I should be if I could honestly answer this question with a categorical: Yes! It is true, we no longer burn our heretics at the stake or torture them on the rack. We have invented much more "civilized" means of dealing with our unwelcome prophets. Instead of wrenching their bodies, we have learned how to torture their minds; and, instead of killing them in the space of a few moments or, at most, hours, we have devised ways of killing them much more slowly over a course of years, by taking away from them their position, their means of earning a livelihood. Instead of throwing stones, we hurl epithets; and instead of lighting fagots, we light the fires of whispering campaigns and yellow press propaganda. We no longer have heresy trials, but we suggest to the heretic that he had better come to terms with the powers that be and preach a "safe and sane" gospel, or else—take the consequences!

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

Worst of all, we do these things, even as did the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, blasphemously naming him who said: "The Spirit of Truth when He is come, shall [progressively] lead you into all truth."

Add to these persistent remnants of darkness the closed-mindedness of the official religion of Nazi Germany today and you get a composite picture which is anything but reassuring. In the light of these examples, does the problem of open-mindedness have anything to do with religion?

There is another lesson to be learned from these historical and contemporary phenomena. When we look at the innumerable instances in which the position taken by the church or by religious people has been proved by subsequent events to have been wrong, is it not rather presumptuous for any of us to claim that in *our* particular religion or religious point of view we have not only nothing but the truth, but *all* the truth? It is, after all, just this sort of finalistic and absolutistic attitude which has produced the general closed-mindedness of people of piety. If their "faith" is "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," then, of course, to tamper with it, to question it, to want to change it or improve upon it is the height of irreligious arrogance. In that case, one has the right to be open-minded *only* toward the unquestioned acceptance of that "faith once for all delivered"; but beyond that, open-mindedness, so far

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

from being a virtue, becomes not only a vice but unpardonable sin. This, obviously, is not even open-mindedness in the first instance; since you may accept or reject only *in toto*. Yet it is interesting, is it not, that Jesus himself, if we can trust the records, so far from having proclaimed such a "closed faith," seems to have known nothing whatever about it. As a matter of fact, he specifically avowed that he still had much to tell his disciples which, at the time, they could neither bear nor understand; that it would be the spirit of truth which, throughout the endless ages, would progressively lead them into more and more truth.

Nevertheless, Jesus was by no means incognizant of the powerful influence of one's own interests in respect to the particular slant of one's outlook. When the rich young ruler came to him, Jesus realized at once that the only thing blocking the road of that young man's salvation was his attachment to his wealth. He recognized that this youthful inquirer was open-minded on every subject save one: his material possessions. It was not because of the service to be rendered to the destitute that Jesus told the young seeker: "Go and give all thy goods to the poor!" It was for the young man's own sake. Jesus knew very well that before his questioner could give his undivided attention to a greater cause, he must first free himself from the one object on which he had set all his affections. How strikingly this demonstrates the clarity

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

of Jesus' insight into human nature, and his recognition of the individual interests which hinder the achievement of an open-minded attitude!

Yet, his unwillingness to pay the necessary price cost the young ruler the "abundant life." So it is with us when we are so under the tyranny of our interests that we cannot be reasonable when anyone attacks or even questions them. Closed-mindedness—yes, even narrow-mindedness—is both inimical to the real progress of mankind and dangerous to the development of vital religion, and clearly contrary to the spirit and attitude of him who said: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall [again, progressively] make you free." Truth need never hide its face. Nor, in so far as it is truth, need it fear any examination, however minute or critical. As for supposed Truth, spelled with a capital T—that is to say, final, absolute, infinite Truth—it is not for finite man. All our truth, in any realm—even in that of natural science—is only finite and relative. It is relative to our age, to the capacities of language, to our background of understanding, to the situation out of which it comes and to the purposes and ends to which it refers. To expect more than that for *human* truth is to expect the impossible, which could not be understood except in its multitudinous connections to which it is relative.

We shall, likely, be told: Granted; but religious truth is divine truth, revealed truth, *not* human truth. To

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

this we must reply with two fundamental considerations: (1) There are at least as many so-called "divine revelations" as there are religions. Which, then, is *the* Truth? And (2) even if one does not raise the preceding question at all, but takes divinely revealed truth for granted, such truth would still have meaning only in so far as it could be expressed, grasped and understood by the finite minds of men, with all their limitations of sense-perception, reason, training and education. An uninterpreted revelation would be meaningless; and a meaningless revelation simply would not reveal anything! There is no escape from the relativity of all humanly expressed and understood truth. The wide varieties of interpretation of the Christian Scriptures themselves offer only the most obvious illustration of this fact.

Who, then, among us is so wise that he has and knows *all* the truth? Or who so foolish as to think that the last word of God's truth has already been uttered?

Surely no attitude in religion is worthy of Jesus which is not one of utter hospitality to all the facts of experience, to any newly discovered truth, or even to any new interpretation of an old truth. Nor dare we forget that *all* the facts of experience are never present in any one specific time in history. Still less does any one person in time possess knowledge of all the facts which are known or knowable in his period.

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

If the history of human progress and the history of religious bigotry prove anything at all, it is that it behooves all of us to be meek and careful in our judgments, to restrain ourselves from dogmatism in our assertions, to have a ready ear to hear what is new to us, to hold attitudes that are hospitable to points of view alien to our own, to possess minds that are genuinely inquiring, and to be prepared to welcome light—whatever its source—that illuminates the darkness of our still abysmal ignorance. Or, to speak in terms of the Scriptures themselves, it behooves us to “prove all things [not merely some, nor merely those that agree with our previous prejudices] and hold fast to that which is good.”

Therewith we have already reached the other aspect of this problematic and paradoxical situation: *Is it possible, on the one hand, to be really and truly open-minded, and still be, on the other hand, deeply committed?*

By way of an advance answer this much would appear to be clear: If it is not possible really and honestly to maintain *both* of these attitudes at one and the same time, then either the discovery of new truth (and therewith human progress) or else vital religion becomes impossible. There would appear to be no way whatever of escaping this conclusion.

It cannot be denied that for the possibility of the dis-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

covery of new truth and of its application to human welfare the attitude of open-mindedness is absolutely indispensable.

On the other hand, it should be equally obvious that without a great loyalty there can be no vital religion.

Ethical religion is never merely a matter of theoretical assent to a number of doctrines or beliefs. If religion is not a commitment, then it is nothing! Here, in fact, lies much of the real significance of the difficulty of our problem. Too much of the time—and still into our own day—men have actually taken their religion as nothing more than theoretical assent to a set of doctrines and sentimental obeisance to ceremonials. Or, if they have thought of religion as a commitment at all, it has been again thought of as purely a commitment to such a set of doctrines or beliefs.

As long as such a way of looking at religion is held, it is not difficult to see what must happen to religion. With the advance of human knowledge, doctrines and beliefs undergo change. The change, at first, may be merely one of reinterpretation of doctrine without implication of doubt concerning the doctrine itself. Sooner or later, however, such reinterpretations are likely to have been carried so far that the doctrine itself is no longer felt to be tenable. Now it is easily seen what happens under such circumstances to people whose whole religion has consisted of an assent to such a

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

dogma or creed. With that dogma either gone or at least terribly shaken, their whole religion gives way. We all have had the experience of hearing people say: "If the Bible is not divinely inspired, then there is nothing I can believe any more." Or: "If Jesus is not God, then the whole Christian religion is built on a falsehood." Or: "If the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus are not historical facts, then Christianity is built on a mere myth." All such statements clearly illustrate types of mind whose religion consists not of an inner attitude or spirit, nor of a great devotion to something infinitely greater than themselves, but of mere theoretical assent to doctrines and dogmas on the actual truth-value of which they themselves had no means of passing reliable judgment. No matter how such doctrines may have originated in the first place, they are often purely matters of historical fact or nonfact and therefore come under the same canons and principles of historical analysis and criticism as do any other historical materials. As such they are subject to at least the possibility of a denial of their historical validity.

Any religion, therefore, which consists of nothing more than the assent of the respective believer to such assertions or doctrines is built upon sand and runs the risk of being washed out at a moment's notice. It is a pathetically flimsy foundation for a man's religion, to say the least. No wonder so many of our contemporaries

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

—and especially college students—claim to have lost their religion. Of course they have. How could they do otherwise and remain honest with themselves? What they once thought was their religion they had to lose when they became acquainted with facts of science and of history which could not honestly be squared with the propositions which they previously “believed.” Such “faith” they ought to lose. Such faith was nothing but unthinking credulity and ignorant superstition. I know of no better proof of this assertion than the way in which some so-called religious people not merely justify but pride themselves on their “faith” by asserting that “through grace God enables you to believe what you know is not true.” Over against such an attitude, Tennyson is quite in the spirit of Jesus when, thinking of Hallam, he says:

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

People who frankly surrender blind and ignorant “faith” when they can no longer honestly and sincerely assent to it, so far as the spirit of Jesus is a standard, are far more truly religious in renouncing their “religion” than they ever were while they thoughtlessly accepted and followed the blind leadership of the blind. For they are at least insisting upon being honest with themselves, with their own intelligence and better

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

knowledge. By renouncing what they are pleased to call their religion they are thus most truly religious in the far more significant sense of the word, in the sense, that is to say, that the religious spirit is the spirit of truth. Was not Jesus interpreted as having said that that spirit was his own spirit?

What, then, is the great commitment of religion, if it is not devotion to a set of doctrines, beliefs, ceremonies or even institutions? Fundamentally, I should say, vital religion is a twofold loyalty which, when the two aspects are properly related to each other, turns out to be really only *one* commitment, with the first aspect marking the end or goal, and the other aspect indicating the proper means of achieving that goal. Approached in this way, religion is first, *devotion to a Great Cause* and, second, *dedication to a Way of Life*. It is clear that the nature of the Cause is bound to ordain the nature of the Way of Life, even as it is also evident that the degree of actual dedication to the Way of Life will determine the extent to which the Great Cause itself will be furthered.

This is not the place to describe in detail the precise nature either of that Great Cause or of that Way of Life—even if I could. (This is something which, in fact, I do not claim to be able to do; since, as will become apparent in the sequel, it is my belief that no man can do this for anyone else. Every believer must establish

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

his supreme allegiance for himself, nor dare he ever think of it as a static goal.)

Of this, however, I am certain: our human life and relations would be infinitely more friendly and understanding if men could "agree to disagree" and "think and let think," while at the same time accepting for themselves and for other human beings the right to be committed to the greatest and most excellent cause which they can conceive; a cause great and magnificent enough to elicit from them unmitigated devotion and supreme allegiance; a cause so worthy and so sublime as to call forth from them the most joyful and glorious commitment to work ceaselessly in its furtherance. Any lesser cause could not, in the long run, maintain its appeal. Probably no cause short of that of "Humanity" is capable ultimately of meeting these requirements.

My other certainty is like the first. Just as men must be free to accept for themselves the greatest cause to which to devote their lives, so they must be left free to commit themselves to the highest and noblest way of life which they can conceive individually or collectively—and to guarantee the same right to every other human being. The determination of the way chosen as one's highest will, of course, for the most part, be determined by the cause to which one has accorded supreme loyalty.

There are important negative corollaries of these principles. If any man is to be free to choose his own

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

greatest cause and his own noblest way of life, then it follows that no man has the privilege, initially, to impugn the motives of any other man who has committed himself to what he believes to be the greatest cause. There is one proviso, of course: one's cause must not itself destroy the rights of other men to make their own commitments. We have no right to interfere with what any other man honestly and sincerely believes to be the highest and noblest way of living. We may disagree; but we have no right to repress an individual's allegiance unless his cause is one that threatens to destroy the civil and human rights of others.

Is this utopian dreaming? Not unless we are prepared to assert that the objective of the Nazarene was a grand illusion. It is perfectly clear that what I have been saying describes pointedly the great loyalty of Jesus. Humanity was the cause to which and for which he gave the last full measure of devotion. It is doubtful whether any man was ever more deeply devoted to that great cause than was the humble Galilean. If anyone ever refused to be sidetracked from his great commitment, it was he. Neither Pharisee nor scribe, neither the promise of bread nor that of earthly power, neither Roman governor nor the Sanhedrin, neither the betrayals among his own closest followers nor suffering and death itself, could for one moment make him give up his vision of and dedication to a redeemed, ennobled humanity, a

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

humanity wherein all men should recognize one another as brothers in the acknowledged community of the great Fatherhood of God!

Moreover, Jesus' own consciousness of the greatness of his cause, coupled with his hearers' vague but none the less genuine recognition of its significance, enabled him to speak with an authority unknown to those official authoritarians of his age, the scribes. The scribes of Jesus' day, like the backward-looking and text-citing documentators of any period, were always walking around in quotation marks, cutting off any argument and shutting out any new light by their eternal: "Of old it was said unto you . . ." Yet the gospel writer reports that, upon the conclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." No wonder! All the authority that the scribes—of that day, as of ours, or of any other day—could muster was the authority of a more or less dead past. The "source" may, of course, have been ever so good a voice in its own time, speaking out of its own age and to its own contemporaries with real and justifiable authority. Nor must we necessarily assume that "ancient truth" is "uncouth." Yet those listeners on the Palestinian mountainside somehow immediately caught the real difference between the authority dug up by their scribes from the sacred writings and sayings of the past and the authenticity of a voice and life which spoke

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

out of today's experience and out of the assurance of today's oneness with the divine will. There could be no mistaking the authority with which a person completely dedicated to the cause of humanity could speak to that selfsame humanity. What is more; a hungering mankind has never really grown tired of listening to that kind of authority: the authority of experience hallowed and sanctified by a great undeviating devotion to the cause of the humanizing of life.

All of which is not to be taken to assert that authority involves infallibility, or that moral authority is the knowledge of future actualities. Rather is the moral consciousness prospective. Its deliverances carry weight to the degree to which they are capable of being shared by other rational minds and to which they can justify themselves to the reasonable continuity of the individual moral agent. In brief, spiritual authority can never remain content with any specific predetermined goal or end, except in so far as the rational and moral nature of man already constitutes a universal background against which all specific moral decisions are made and all moral goals constructed. It is in the sense of such a "universality" that the "cause of humanity," as referred to by me, is to be construed.²

²Part of the implications of this position will be found developed further in Chapter V. The specific ethical point of view here maintained may be found discussed in two articles: (1) by Henry W. Stuart on "A Preface to Ethics" (*College of the Pacific Publications in Philosophy*, III, 1934, pp. 89-100), and (2) by the author "On the Nature of the Ethical Problem" (*The International Journal of Ethics*, XLVII, 1936, pp. 57-69).

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

Such, in fact, was Jesus' commitment. When, in harmony with the language and thought patterns of his day, he called it "the kingdom of God," what did he have in mind if not an ideal future of humanity? He could see the necessary principles involved in such an ideal humanity and he saw the basic prerequisite for it in the actually existing potentialities of human nature, but he carefully—and wisely—refrained from delineating the detailed blueprints of the ideal society of tomorrow. The "kingdom" was an object of prayer: "Thy kingdom come" was therefore something still to be achieved. Just because its realization was largely in the future it was both impossible and futile to attempt to fill in its details. He talked of it in parables, in anecdotes and analogies. What concerned him were the principles of its construction rather than the precise essence of its nature. At the same time he was not creating it out of thin air. If the kingdom, in its ideal achievement, lay in the future, in the existence of its citizens it was already "among us," even as in the potentiality of its possible accomplishment it was already "within us." Thus the "kingdom" is, collectively as well as individually, future and present, potential, actual and ideal. Its achievement is a unique task for each individual citizen, and its precise development dependent upon particular commitments, goals and deeds both of individual citizens and of the collective group.

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

The ideal life and development of man, individually and collectively—this is his Cause. This cause was the one central theme of all his discourses, the subject of his prayers, the call to his disciples, the dedication of his life—yes, the reason for his death. Today we might call it “the realm of God,” the “brotherhood of man” or just the ideal human society of tomorrow. Whatever the name, the fundamental idea is quite the same—a new structure of human society at a level so superior to our present chaotic human relations that we can think of it only in broad outline, and more in contrast to what now is than in the precise nature of its own status.

Is it necessary, in the light of this discussion, to point to the fact that commitment to such an ideal definitely implies a way of life? What could be farther from obeisance to a dead letter than allegiance to such a cause? How the supposedly religious devotion of the average believer, too often simply a concurrence with verbal creeds and external ceremonials, pales by comparison! One may lead almost any kind of life, as long as one's so-called religious faith is only a matter of insulated theoretical beliefs and of periodic ceremonial habits. How different is faith when it is loyalty to a great cause, to the greatest goal one can progressively construct! A great cause is bound to elicit from its true devotees a great way of living, for such an encom-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

passing purpose can be furthered neither by smallness and meanness nor by lukewarmness and indifference. It demands a way of living somehow in harmony with and appropriate to its nature. It demands that way of life, *not* as an intermittent second thought on Sundays, but as a continuous mode of action daily and hourly. Anything less than this, any haphazard, unexamined life, can neither be in honesty called a "way of life" nor can we dignify it as a real dedication, for such require a cause great and exacting enough to demand everything of us. That is why religion—thus understood—is a life; that is why so-called religious life, without the great dynamic of an overmastering purpose and exacting loyalty, is such a feeble and sickly thing.

What, now, shall we say concerning those of our fellow men who are not committed to our cause, or who may be committed to our common cause, but see it in a different light, or who do not follow the particular way of life which we have come to pursue as the only effective means of realizing the goal? We must ask this question if we would be facing the actualities of human life. Where there are as many, as broad, and as fundamental differences as always exist among men, it would be sheer folly to imagine that all of them would see eye to eye when it comes to a determination of the greatest of all possible causes or the means of

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

realizing it. However great our cause is in our eyes, and however excellent our way of life may be to us, we need to remember that someone else may feel just as deeply that his cause is the greatest and his way of life the most significant.

Perhaps it will be noted that, with this question, we are back at the core of our paradox again. We do want to be deeply committed to the best and noblest we know or can imagine, yet we dare not allow even such commitment to constitute a stumblingblock to other fellow travelers upon the roadway of life. This happens all too often, as we all know, when, in our enthusiasm for our cause and for our way of living, we intentionally or unintentionally say unkind or perhaps even damning things about those who do not happen to see it all our way. As a matter of fact, if our cause be that which we denote as "Humanity," and our present hope be that of establishing truly human relations with our fellows, is there any more immediate mode of frustration of our aims than thus cutting ourselves off from rapport with other members of the human family?—Not to speak of the equally damaging fact that, by so doing, we are also hurting our own possible progress, since our reflective advance is obviously dependent to a large degree upon fruitful relations with our fellows.—Yet is not one compelled on reflection to admit that, although damaging to ourselves as well as to others, this

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

cutting ourselves off from such fruitful relations is the tragic fate which we so often ironically impose upon our own ideals? There is no quicker and surer way to insulate ourselves behind an impenetrable wall than to encircle our heads with the "holier than thou" halo. Few things do men resent more immediately or keenly. How far Jesus was from such an attitude! "He eats with publicans and sinners and chats with women of the street!" They thought these accusations were a terrible indictment. One wonders whether our attitudes are very different from theirs, if different at all.

Of course, even when committed to the cause of humanity, our devotion all too often fails at the point of our treatment of individual men. For most of us it is easier to give allegiance to a grand abstract cause than to prove this allegiance in the specific situations of life. Especially is this true when the concrete case may present us with conditions and individuals indescribably far removed from those of our idealized picture. Looked upon with eyes of coldness, some "men" scarcely seem to belong to the species. Here Radhakrishnan observes what we are so prone to do: "We love humanity in the abstract, but pass it by in the concrete. We love the beggars on the stage, but not at the theater-door nor even at the temple-door."³ It is

³ S. Radhakrishnan in his essay "The Role of Philosophy in the History of Civilization" (*Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, New York, 1927, p. 548).

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

more comfortably pleasant to contemplate the beauty of our goal than to act remedially in the ugly situation that oppresses our brother. It is easier to render lip service to the cause of humanity than to treat as a man every instance of the species who crosses our path or conveniently stays on the far side of the railroad tracks. It is more soothing to our souls to adore an apotheosized Jesus than to exercise ourselves to see him potentially in one whom we deem "a leper."

Still there is no escaping that it is only in particular and very real men that we can actually honor humanity. If it is not individual persons whom we love and honor, respect and revere, then humanity as such is *not our* cause. Nor, for that matter, is God, if we give a fig for the opinion of the writer of the letters of St. John. "He who says he loves God, but hates his fellow man, is a liar," bluntly asserts the author of the epistles. We might remind ourselves that in terms of purity of life it is Jesus who of all persons would seemingly have reason to "gather his skirts about him" lest he be contaminated by contact with the filth and venom of common lowly humanity. Yet he went out into the market place, into the highways and byways of life and mingled with all sorts and conditions of men. It was Jesus who taught the Salvation Army the fact that "a man may be down, but he is never out." And

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

it was Jesus who said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Nor does Jesus fail to answer us when we attempt to evade the duty of being brother to him who disagrees with us. "Who is my neighbor?" asks a keen young mind. Jesus points not to the like-minded and identical-believing Jew, but to the different-minded and other-believing Samaritan. No, our "brother" is not just he who has come to espouse our cause and join our way of life! Our brother is also our "enemy" whom we are enjoined to love. Bringing the injunction to the present, it asks us to love a few dictators and the people under their heels, and to love a few imperialists and the men who must ruthlessly carry out the concocted will.

This does not mean that we must approve of the "enemies'" deeds, commitments or way of life, any more than we need to approve of Japan in China. It does mean that no matter how fundamental the difference of opinion, of loyalty and of living, we have no right, either moral or spiritual, to break the staff over anyone. Jesus said: "Other sheep I have: them I must bring also." Nor did he fail to advise: "Judge not, that ye be not judged!"

One hundred and thirty-eight years ago the famous

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte stated this same thought as follows:

In my actions I ought to reverence the freedom of other beings around me. The question for me is not what they, according to my conceptions, ought to do, but what I may venture to do in order to induce them to do it. I can only desire to act on their conviction and their will as far as the order of society and their own consent will permit; but by no means, without their conviction and consent, to influence their powers and relations. They do what they do on their own responsibility; with this I neither can nor dare intermeddle. . . . It concerns me more to respect their freedom, than to hinder or prevent what to me seems evil in its use.⁴

As a matter of fact, what we are concerned with in all such situations is never a matter of condoning or of excusing or even of compromising; still less of simply giving up our own commitments. Opposing positions are to be neither reduced to a dead level nor merely compromised. It is precisely the nature of the open-mindedness of a really mature personality, of a reflectively rational moral agent, to achieve or approach unity by the creative construction of new aims, goals, commitments on a higher level—on a higher level, that is to say, for not just one but for both (or all) of the contending parties. It is, therefore, on the part of the really open-minded mature person never a matter of

⁴ *The Vocation of Man*, trans. by William Smith, pp. 166-167.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

bringing an opposing point of view simply to willing or unwilling agreement with his own, or *vice versa*. Real disagreement among intellectually honest persons, so far from being a cause of estrangement, should always be an opportunity for educative progress: in the meeting of sincere, though differing, minds there would seem to lie one of the best chances for the possible inner advance of both minds. It is easy to see that much could be gained if people were disposed to settle their differences on a higher level of a still to be achieved unity rather than by the usual method of dragging other people down to their own level. It is the predisposition of the human mind toward such an attitude that constitutes the real sign of that mature open-mindedness about which I have been talking. This does not mean less commitment. It does mean, rather, that one of the greatest and most helpful human commitments, one of the most necessary attitudes that the human mind has to acquire if men would live rationally, morally and spiritually, is loyalty to open-mindedness itself.

In the final analysis, Jesus himself would seem to offer the best practical *and* theoretical answer to our question. Both in theory and in practice, he exemplifies *open-minded allegiance*. Here, in one phrase, we have a real suggestion for the solution of our paradox. There surely never was anyone who was more profoundly

CAN WE BE OPEN-MINDED?

committed to the cause of humanity. For it he lived, labored, suffered and died. Yet it is just as true that there never was anything closed-minded or even narrow-minded about the great Carpenter of Nazareth. He showed something of the impartiality of the rain, which "falleth upon the just and unjust."

II

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD" WITHOUT "LOSING OUR SOUL"?

*Attend! That homage I demand;
Aye, though I cease to speak—I shall be heard.
I have called you, blind Leaders of the Blind,
Shrewd Culprits, Puppets, Bawds, despised Clowns
That you convene a moment from your chores,
Your trades, armipotent machineries
You prate of worthy emmets without brains.
Heed! I arraign you that—for trinkets, coins,
Tombs, ashes, demolition and disgrace—
Ingrates, incompetents gone godless-mad,
Who might have builded nobler mansions, you
Have pawned your souls.*

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

THERE is a general American saying to the effect that "business is business." With this remark the economic life of our nation has justified itself to the public conscience as a law unto itself, from the time when unscrupulous traders and so-called pioneers purchased the results of hard labor of the Indians for a few worthless trinkets or stole whole parcels of land from them for a few bottles of "fire-water," to the day when an Insull, a Mitchell and others have carried thousands of their fellow citizens down with them in the aftermath of speculative financial manipulations and industrial pyr-

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

amidings. What is more: despite the hardships of the past eight years during the great American depression, neither the economic leaders of the nation nor the country itself have yet repented of the fallacy of that slogan. It is not merely big business which is protesting against the meager attempts of the present administration to exercise at least a measure of control over the economic life of the nation. Even the economically "small fry" of the country, yes, and many even of our definitely underprivileged, are still willing to join in the general protest against government "interference" with business and certain of its practices.

Nor is one of the major reasons for this widespread attitude far to seek. Too many of our fellow citizens are still living under the delusion, engendered in their primary-school teaching, that on the principle "business is business" it is possible for almost any ambitious American to proceed from the station of a street-corner newsboy to that of a great banker, industrial magnate or President of the United States. Moreover, as long as the present financial lords of the nation can have their way, such silly teachings and such idle dreams will never be absent from the indoctrination of our young; for, just as long as people can be brought up on such ideas, just so long they will not only permit the present pernicious economic practice and principle to remain an unrestrained law unto itself, but they will

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

actually do all in their power to help their economic masters to keep that pernicious practice in power. Periodicals of the success-story type will keep dangling before the eyes of an always credulous general public the marvelous example of men who rose from less than nothing to their various positions of economic and political power. The people, moreover, ever willing and even anxious to fool themselves, especially when it comes to the matter of faith in their own ultimate accomplishments, will swallow that sort of doctrine. It helps to inflate their ego and acts even in their most miserable moments as a powerful palliative and drug, thus keeping them quietly in line to do the bidding and will of their economic masters. After all, does not every red-blooded son of man, being in the world, desire to "gain it"?

It is in this kind of economic and psychological world that whatever of religion there is today in America must live and make itself felt. The religious leader who fails to recognize these facts is not only a blind leader of the blind, he must be charged with criminal negligence unless, indeed, religion has nothing to do with the world in which men actually live. Here again it must be acknowledged, in truth, that the determiners of our economic destinies have been tremendously successful. They have kept a goodly proportion

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

of the so-called religious leadership of the country confirmed in the belief that economics and politics are totally outside the realm and influence of religion. Most American clergymen, to this day, remain convinced that economics and politics have no place in the pulpit. Both economic royalists and traditional religionists have taught them that such matters are of "secular" concern and as such should be allowed no entrance into the sanctified holy of holies of religious worship and divine adoration. We must not permit the sacred halls of divine truth to be profaned by bringing in secular interests and merely mundane human needs! Keep religion out of business! Business has only to do with man's material aspirations, whereas religion concerns a man's relationship—not, primarily, to his fellow man, but to his God! You can't mix those two things!

Just as long as religionists have believed these myths, just so long have our captains of industry and barons of finance been only too willing to support the work of the church. Why should they not? Their financial investments in a major social institution that so worked hand in glove with the preservation of their own interests have been minimal in comparison to the return they have reaped from such valuable support. It may, in fact, be doubted whether our economic overlords have ever made more profitable investments than

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

were their contributions to the churches which thus—whether intentionally or unintentionally—played the game with them.

Now at last, however, the day has dawned when the stocks and bonds in profitable enterprises owned by churchmen and even church officials can no longer keep *all* the religious leaders of our day in such docile and pathetic submission to an economic life and principle which is not only divorced from everything truly religious but from everything moral and humanly decent as well. At last the day has come when the unholy and pernicious medieval doctrine of a hard and fast division between the “sacred” and the “secular” is being recognized for what it is. The present is a lamentably late day in the life of Western civilization for this lesson to be learned. But, better late than never!

We are learning at last that religion, whatever it may be, does have to be had and worked out in this world, in the only world in which we are actually alive. This is not to be taken to imply that religion is in the process of losing all its transcendental or other-worldly reference. Such, obviously, is not the case. One must, however, insist upon the proposition that religion today is at least engaged in the process of becoming vitally conscious of this world. Even in religion, we are saying, there is at last progress toward the discovery of our existing world. In other fields, of

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

course, such an orientation of man's interest is by no means new. Nor, as a matter of fact, is it wholly novel in the field of religion or even within the Christian tradition. As we shall have abundant opportunity to note, Jesus was extremely conscious of the actual world in which he was living and apparently had no desire to take his disciples out of it. Yet it must be admitted that, through the centuries, Christianity became more and more otherworldly, to the point of looking upon this present world as only a sad "vale of tears" through which one must somehow pass while preparing for the next and ultimately only real world. The visible universe came to be viewed as merely the temporary stage upon which the drama of salvation was to be worked out, while man was to be saved for the world which was to come. Nor has that point of view been completely discarded by Christendom; in fact, it probably still dominates the greater portion of those who, in one sense or another, call themselves "Christians."

None the less, it is significant that now another—a more humanistic—point of view is gaining in acceptance at least among the more thoughtful religious leaders. Wherever this is the case the realization that religion itself is *a kind of life* is making itself increasingly felt. As a corollary of this realization, men are beginning to understand that no religion which is truly vital can be shut off in a compartment separate from the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

rest of mundane interests. Never, of course, have the *professions* of religion agreed that one could limit one's religious life to the few hours of the "holy" day of the week and to a tenth of one's income or material possessions. As in everything else, however, man's actual conduct has spoken far more tellingly than have his verbal professions. There can be no valid denial of the fact that, so far as actual practice under the compartmentalist view of religion was concerned, men have relegated their religion to a comparatively small proportion of their lives. Many men to this day, it must be admitted, are succeeding very well in keeping their religion, their patriotism, their economics and politics, their business and their club relations, in airtight compartments, and with scarcely any intellectual apprehension of the connections between one compartment and another.

The clamor against "mixing economics and religion" is, of course, no new clamor. Clearly it must have been present in Jesus' day. Certainly it was present in the days of Amos and Micah. Prophets who, in those far-away days, dared to call attention to the inevitable ethical connection between economics and religion were just as thoroughly hated as they still are today. Opposition did not keep those spiritual leaders from continuing to make their categorical pronouncements linking man's material life and needs with religion.

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

"Woe unto you who devour widows' houses!" "I despise your solemn assemblies!" "But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream!" Do such judgments have no application in our day?

Now it is my frank contention that, whatever a compartmentalist type of religion may or may not be, it is not vital Christianity nor even any other kind of vital religion. A religion worthy of its name *must make a difference in any and every area of life*. A religion which, for example, makes no difference in the life of the student, is not anything which should be dignified with the name religion at all. And a religion which leaves a man's politics or pocketbook untouched is neither his real religion nor his real philosophy. A man's *real* religion even as a man's real philosophy is bound to penetrate every nook and corner of his life. So, too, a man's *real* prayers are his actual aims and desires, "uttered or unexpressed," for the realization of which he is willing to work and labor, wait and pine; rather than the things which, when formally going through the social or personal motions of praying, he puts before God, not because he really wants them, but because he thinks that they are the things for which God would want him to pray. How funny, but also how utterly revealing, our *real* prayers would sound, if we actually had the courage to put them

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

publicly into words! This great businessman, an important deacon, trustee or steward in the church, would be praying God to help him to put that not-quite-ethical deal over on his competitor or on his customers. That banker, with an equally important official function in the church, would be begging God to cause a sudden and not-quite-reasonable rise in the stock market. This college instructor would demand of God that he be advanced over the head of his nearest rival; whereas that student over yonder would be pleading for God's help in not being detected in handing in a term paper written last year by someone else for the same course.

How far such illustrations are from being the idle creations of my imagination, may best be seen by the following story, told in his inimitable way by John T. Flynn:

Down on his knees in the dim glow of the Wall Street twilight old Daniel Drew prays to the Lord for a blessing on his latest market venture. Uncle Dan'l with his clever pupils, Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, had just completed their most daring raid on Erie stock. In its train came a string of losses, bankruptcies, and suicides which made it a classic in Wall Street villainy. Now secretly old Dan'l had deserted his two confederates and set a snare for them. He had promised some time before \$250,000 to build a theological seminary . . . Now the \$250,000 was due. And old Uncle Dan'l planned to catch his partners, Gould and Fisk, unawares and squeeze from their unregenerate

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

wallets the \$250,000 needed for his divinity school plus a good deal more for the pious founder himself. His bomb was placed. The fuse was lit. The event was in the hands of Heaven. And so now as Wall Street hurried home from its day's labors, the devout old gentleman fell upon his knees amid his ledgers and his market tables and implored the Lord to smile upon his new enterprise for the sake of his divinity school. As it turned out, however, the Lord was on the other side of the market. Gould and Fisk fooled their pious old master, shifted their position, squeezed him mercilessly and wrung a million from his sanctimonious hide.

But the picture of Daniel Drew, as pious an old cutthroat as ever scuttled a pool or squeezed a short, on his marrow bones praying the Lord for the success of a crooked Wall Street deal, so that he might endow his college of divine learning, is one which has provoked no end of mystery, scorn and derision. For it is but a symbol of a phenomenon very familiar to the last generation and not wholly expunged from this one. No stranger bedfellows ever lay down together in a man's soul than this oddly assorted pair—religion and thrift—roommates in the breast of the business man—living together, as many people have believed, in sin.¹

Here is a picture which in substance is true, whether the details of the story can be vouched for or not. Moreover, this is, of course, only one incident out of many similar ones. In comparison to such *real* desires of many men, how harmless and meaningless, for the most part, are the things for which they actually do

¹ John T. Flynn, *God's Gold*, pp. 394-395.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

ask in public worship! Bless this and that and the other thing! Especially bless the faraway heathen! Etc., etc. Is it any wonder that many intelligent men of our day have come to look upon official religion as just so much humbug?

No, if religion cannot touch life where it is actually being lived by the man of today, then we had better be honest and have done with it. A religion of mere Sunday ceremonialism, besides being hopelessly out of date, is impotent. If the "lost horizon" of vital religion is to be recaptured we must find it present as the actually existing horizon in every present human situation, problem, interest and need. This, obviously, includes the economic needs of man as well as any others.

Now it is true, of course, that *economics* by itself *is not religion*. Here again there is no use of confusing either terms or issues. A religion, however, which has nothing to do with, nothing to say to and no effect upon our economic life, principles and practice is *not a live religion*.

As a matter of fact, the very people who keep constantly shouting: "Keep religion out of business!" would be the first ones to be horrified if religious leaders were suddenly to practice the reverse of the slogan by keeping business out of religion. What a cry would go up in official boards, sessions, congregational business meetings and the like, if ministers were

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

suddenly to declare in favor of the running of churches, church schools, women's organizations, missionary societies, without any regard for good business principles! Can one imagine what would happen if we started to build edifices wholly irrespective of the financial matters necessarily involved? Such procedure would rightly be considered to be at once the height of folly, as well as of immorality.

Just as it is impossible, then, to run religious institutions without regard for economic principles, so it is (or certainly should be) impossible for any truly religious person to be part of the economic system without trying constantly to apply to it the principles of his religion.

After all, it must be conceded that every man has to live in a world of material things and make use of the methods or media of exchange. To suppose that the spirit and underlying attitude in which he engages in these economic procedures has nothing to do with the meaning of his life is to suppose that such procedures are themselves wholly divorced from the actual pattern and values of his existence. Some realization of how preposterous such a proposition is we certainly have come to—if we never did before—during the years since 1929. If we had not known it previously, we know now that whether a man has a "half-way decent" and reasonably secure income for himself and

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

his family or not makes a tremendous difference in his whole outlook upon life.

Accepting this observed influence of one's economic situation upon one's outlook, I wish to assert that there should be a correlative reaction of one's inner attitudes upon the daily procedures and activities in which one engages. Fundamental attitudes² do play their part in how one "takes" life; they affect the selection of values which constitute the meaning of one's existence.

Jesus, as a matter of fact, seems to have been perfectly aware of the reciprocal influence of these two functions within the human world. It is true, of course, that he never left out of sight man's spiritual nature and inner needs; nor did he ever permit the things that should be sought first to be pushed back into a secondary position. Consistently he held to the primacy of man's spiritual life. Contrary, however, to many who since that day have claimed to be his followers, Jesus never seems to have treated men as disembodied spirits. He appears constantly to have been deeply interested in the physical and even material welfare of men. He was torn by the sight of their physical infirmities.

²This must not be taken to mean that such an "inner attitude" or "commitment" must itself be static. Rather, as I have already pointed out in the preceding chapter, to be truly ethical such an attitude must be ever ready to move up to "higher ground." Only the commitment to open-mindedness itself is a commitment, from which, in principle, there can be no ethical appeal.

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

We do not find him too busy preaching at men to have any time for "going about doing good." He not only healed the sick, but commanded his disciples to feed the hungry multitude when they were caught without food in an outlying place. At the same time he used every opportunity for physical and material helpfulness to convey some spiritual message. In brief, as a realistic interpreter of human nature, Jesus refused to neglect any side of the complex creatures which we are. It always was the whole man in whom he was interested, not just an abstracted part of man. This fact itself gives the lie to the notion that there is one side of man which is so earthly that it has nothing whatever to do with man's "spiritual nature" or that man's spiritual aspect can have no relation to it nor influence upon it. In fact, every phase of man's life is simply one more area in which man's spiritual life may make itself felt.

The physical universe and man's material needs, therefore, instead of having to be viewed as necessarily the handicaps of the spiritual life, should be viewed as opportunities for the expression and exercise of that life. In other words, the world is the natural and suitable arena for the expression and development of man's spiritual nature. Now, the economic side of man's life is no exception to this statement. Few things, for example, would be more unrealistic than to talk glibly

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

about "filthy lucre." There is nothing necessarily evil in money. (And its absence is sometimes quite an inconvenience, as some of us well know.) Essentially, money is simply a convenient means of exchange. As such, in its own way, it is just as natural and legitimate as language is in another sphere of communication. It is not money, but the *love* of money, which is said to be the root of all evil. In other words, it is when money, instead of being merely a means, becomes an end in itself and is regarded with the love which is to be reserved for spiritual beings only that it constitutes a devastating and degrading influence in our lives. It is when men use money to achieve unwonted power over other men or permit themselves to become slaves to it that money has ruinous effects. And it is when men withhold the just and needed economic returns from others in order to keep more than their rightful share of it for themselves that money becomes a snare. Even in these cases, of course, it is not money itself which is bad, but the use to which it is put. Both money and the world at large can, therefore, well bear a spiritual interpretation—by a spiritually minded person.

As a matter of fact, unless I am very much mistaken, it was Jesus' own intention to "win the world." One needs merely to state this fact, however, to become at once conscious that there is a vast difference

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

between what we ordinarily mean by "gaining the world" and Jesus' aim of "winning the world." This difference is one both of purpose and of procedure; and since, as usual, the procedure is largely determined by the purpose, the two differences really amount to two aspects of the same thing.

It is clear, is it not, that it was *not for his own sake* that Jesus was interested in "winning the world." He held this aim *for the sake of humanity itself*. Thus his intent and purpose were *not selfish*, but altruistic. It was, again, the cause of humanity to which he was committed. And from that cause I do not imagine his mature activity ever deviated.

How does such a purpose compare with that of men who are bent upon gaining the world of material and financial success? Is it really necessary to discuss this difference in detail, or is it so obvious that "a way-faring man, though a fool," could not miss the point? *Why*, in general, do men work for material, financial, economic *success*? Is it in order to benefit mankind or in order to "feather their own little [or large] nests"? I think we all know the answer. Nor is this admission altered by the fact that some men, after they are entirely or nearly through with their own uses of financial power, try to salve whatever of spiritual "conscience" they may still retain by bequeathing large sums to charity or to educational, scientific or religious

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

institutions. Let there be no misunderstanding at this point. I do not happen to be among those religious fanatics who would refuse so-called "tainted money" for a good cause. I should much prefer to have "tainted money" turned aside for good purposes than to have it still further "tainted" by continued misuse. These are, however, not the matters with which I am concerned at present. Rather I am concerned with the fact that a last-minute diversion of such moneys to good purposes (no matter how worth while these may be) cannot, in itself, be named as the *original* and *dominating* intent behind the making of that money. The fundamental motive of most men in their rush after money, power, success is self-gratification. The self, moreover, which they thus indulge and intend to gratify is not even their own better, much less their best, self. It is the self which can be satisfied at the level of material things.

However, we must not forget that our days have also produced an Albert Schweitzer, a Mahatma Gandhi, a Toyohiko Kagawa, an E. Stanley Jones and thousands of others of like character. Admitting their presence, it would seem a bit late in the day to assert that self-aggrandizement is the *only* motivation of which man is capable. Socrates and Jesus were by no means the only men who were basically moved by their interest in and love for their fellow men. Nor, as we

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

have just seen, are all who were thus motivated personages of the distant past. Many of them are living today and in our very midst. In this connection we may note that it is precisely the persons who have a way of losing themselves in others, in the cause of humanity, who also seem to be inwardly the most happy. Real and abiding happiness, that is to say, seems hardly ever to be found following the footsteps of those who are continually chasing happiness for themselves. It rather seems to follow those who, for the sake of making *others* happy, can completely forget about their own happiness. Here, again, we meet another of the great paradoxes of life. Men who consciously *seek* happiness seem seldom to achieve it; while those who are too busy with the welfare and happiness of others to be able to pay any attention to their own, have abiding joy through the very happiness which they have brought to others.

It is equally obvious, of course, that there is as much difference in *procedure* between "gaining the world" and "winning the world" as there was in the contrasting objectives. Being concerned only with achieving their aim, men who desire to "gain the world" for their own private benefit have no scruples about the means utilized, except in so far as these may be dangerous—antagonizing unnecessarily a rival, or transgressing too obviously a regulation which not even the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

best lawyers can circumvent. Aside from such purely self-protective considerations, the only question would seem to be: How can I most quickly and with the least cost to myself get what I want? These people have learned well the Shakespearean dictum that "all's fair in love and war"; and making their way in the economic order is, for them, always a part, not of love, but of war. Anything is fair that gets you there! It makes no difference what it does to anyone else. Cut-throat competition, starvation wages, unsanitary working conditions, child labor, company unions, and so on—nothing matters so long as the aim of personal private profit is achieved. When, moreover, this kind of procedure has finally broken down under its own weight and inherent self-contradiction—as it certainly did in 1929—and a government comes along which says that *private business has demonstrated its moral inability to produce for the public welfare* and must, therefore, come under some kind of federal supervision, then these captains of industry and barons of finance, who see their previously unhindered chances for fleecing the public slightly restricted, put up a tremendous howl, crying about the "loss of personal liberty, private initiative, and the [supposed] right to run one's business to suit one's self."

It *is* terrible, isn't it, when a government dares to interfere with the right of private enterprise to ruin

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

the economic life of the whole nation? Look, on the other hand, at those who would "win the world" for humanity's own sake. Here *nothing is held to be appropriate which in the least violates either individual personality or the welfare of society at large*. The individual's liberty may be interfered with in the interest of society as a whole; but not his personality. This is so true in the case of Jesus' own attitude, for example, that, even for the sake of a man's own personal good, he himself would not violate the right of that man to say freely either "yes" or "no" to the issue of his own salvation. It might, I suppose, be maintained that God could save men against their own will. This, however, is impossible if one wishes to hold the ideas both of an ethical God and of the real moral agency of man. On these assumptions even God Himself must respect the *rights* of the individual, though that individual may choose his own destruction.

Those who would "win the world," in other words, are committed to an ethical interpretation of human life. This means that every human personality is sacred to them and must, accordingly, never be used as a means to an end. Personality, on that ground, is an end in itself and the possibility of its free development and unhindered growth constitutes the essential ethical limitation upon our choices of procedure. This being the case, no method which does violence to personality is

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

ever excusable or justifiable. Men must not be made subservient to procedures; men must never be mere tools or "hands" or means to someone's self-gratification. Accordingly, any kind of economic order—or disorder—which uses men as mere pawns upon the chessboard of powerful financial or political interests or as mere means to the economic success of a few privileged individuals at the top of the ladder stands *ipso facto* condemned before any enlightened spiritual conscience. If such a statement is condemnatory of the present economic principles and practice of our people, this surely is not my fault, for I am not responsible for the economic principles under which we are operating!

More than that! If we admit the validity of a negative moral judgment upon the major features of the economic life of our day, it will be difficult to deny that anyone who justifies a set of economic procedures which employ human personalities as mere means to selfish ends stands in danger of "losing his own soul." The issue is thus clearly drawn. The Nazarene himself set it forth clearly in his imperious saying: "Ye cannot serve two masters: ye cannot serve God and Mammon." If Mammon be your god, then at least be honest about it and do not try to cloak your service of His Monetary Majesty in the misleading garments of the worship of a God who is Spirit and Truth. If your God be the spiritually conceived "Father of our

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

Lord Jesus Christ," you will not be able to serve Him by bowing before the altars of pure gold or by aiming at the achievement of financial power or success. The aim of those two kinds of service are altogether too far apart, their procedures are entirely too conflicting, to make a worship of both masters possible. The profit motive³ and the service motive simply do not go hand in hand. He who has learned and experienced the joy of serving his fellow men seeks no profits for himself. Whereas he who knows no other joy than that which comes to him in clipped coupons or in a few dollars a month raise in pay simply does not yet know either what it really means to be a spiritual man or what contentment is possible for him who has learned to forget his own happiness.

Can we, then, "gain the world" without "losing our soul"?

The answer, by now, should be perfectly clear. It all depends upon what one means by "gaining the world." If we mean by it what the phrase obviously conveys in the first instance—namely, the achievement of so-called "worldly success" in the realms of business, fi-

³ The persistent misunderstanding of this term may justify an explanatory note. The attack upon the profit motive, for the most part, contains no intention to deny the perfect legitimacy of reasonable profits, which, within the framework of a capitalistic economics, are simply necessary to life itself. The emphasis in the attack is rather on profits as the major or even only motive for labor, investments or enterprise. It is this *motivation* which is not only unworthy of man, but destructive of his deeper self.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

nance and politics, as "success" is understood in these areas—then, clearly, such "gain" is not compatible with the preservation and growth of our spiritual life. To "gain the world" of such "success" in a world of economic chaos where "every man is out for himself, and the devil take the hindmost," is to surrender our spiritual birthright for the temporary mess of pottage which that chaotic world has to offer.

The simple fact is that the moment we "gain the world" in normal fashion we destroy every possibility of creating our "soul." In the nature of the case, the very process of competitive acquisition can proceed only in terms of losses to other men; and no man can win his own soul at the expense of another. That is why the philosophy of acquisition is destructive to the self: the seed of its growth contains the germs of death. It is, therefore, not only amazing, it is positively tragic how great is the number of those—even within the official memberships of our churches, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—who are daily bowing their knees before the Golden Calf of this worldly "success."

On the other hand, we need not permit the veritable mob of the gold-blinded men to obscure our vision of the comparatively large number of those "who have not bowed their knee before Baal." In fact, if one be amazed at the vast masses who are still in daily pursuit of the Golden Calf, one also cannot fail to be hap-

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

pily surprised when one sees the constantly growing number of those to whom such idol worship is not even enticing. It is not that they are blind to the physical and material things which the world has to offer. Still less do they despise those things—in their rightful place. In fact, they know the real value of money, for example, usually far better than do those who worship at its shrine. But they have also learned that the true values of human life, the things which really count, are priceless. Their value can neither be stated nor estimated in economic terms, *not* because they are cheap, but because no amount of money can purchase them; such as the values of truth, justice, kindness, love, understanding, fellowship, coöperation.

It may be true that the materialists among us appear to make the loudest noise; but I do not believe that their number is growing. Rather, I am firmly convinced that the reason we are all so conscious of their presence and of their domination in our midst is because increasingly we recognize the inner poverty of the life of the Philistine. An ever-growing host of men is becoming aware of the greater and deeper values, of the more distinctively *human* experiences available in the realms of appreciation of the things of the intellect, of art, of the spirit and of mutual understanding and brotherhood. It is not merely in the more specifically religious realm that this revaluation is taking

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

place; it is making decided strides in many of the professions, such as in medicine and education, and even in politics and business. Granted, it may be a relatively slow growth; but the tendency is definitely noticeable in nearly every area of human life and interest. Men are realizing that the greatest and most lasting satisfactions are to be found, not in grabbing for themselves, but in rendering in large and in small the best kind of service to society.

In the realm of medicine, one thinks at once of such a man as Louis Pasteur, especially in view of the fact that he is followed by a long line of men for whom the health and welfare of human beings is far more important than any incidentals of their professional activity. What person who has gone through primary, secondary and collegiate schools does not remember with gratitude and admiration some teacher or teachers whose work was radiant with the joy of imparting truth and with the recognition of the opportunity significantly to influence plastic human lives? This group of sacrificial men and women—perhaps still a small minority—in the teaching profession as a whole is none the less sufficiently widespread that I would rather do homage to all of them than single out a few individuals by name. The world is unspeakably rich in such service. In the legal field one thinks of the great men who, at the cost of popularity with the multitude and of ap-

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

proval from those in high positions, had the courage to "dissent," to remain true, even in the midst of the very outbursts of hell, to their convictions and to their never-faltering interest in the weal and woe of even the commonest of men. Men of science, of course, have been known for decades to be committed to the disinterested pursuit of their studies. This has been so universally true that some of those who have entered industrial chemistry, for example, may be taken as the exceptions which prove the rule; by no means could one assert that all these are either divorced from thought of the human consequences of their activity or motivated merely by desire for material gain. Nor is even the realm of business, industry and finance without its magnificent witnesses to the service motive as both genuinely worthy and practically sound. The late-lamented Edward A. Filene is only the most immediately obvious example of this type.

Despite my admission of these encouraging tendencies, I shall be told that most of the things I have been stressing in the discussion of our present paradox have been negative. It will be insisted, therefore, that if I cannot offer some more concrete positive suggestions, I might better have left unsaid all the things that I have said.

To deny that this discussion has been largely critical, if not actually negative, would be futile. The justi-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

fication for this emphasis is to be found in the fact that in the area of economics our religious life and profession have been, up to now, only less impotent than they have been in the realm of politics and nationalistic patriotism. Nothing could be gained, therefore, by closing our eyes to the sobering realities of the situation. To bring out *some* of these facts in the clearest fashion has seemed to me to be a first prerequisite in the quest for religious realism.

Nor should I allow anyone to suppose that I hold it to be the function either of the philosopher or of the religious thinker to work out a detailed blueprint of a new economic order. That, after all, must remain the task of the social scientist; its usurpation by anyone else would be the height of presumption.

On the other hand, I do not wish to escape the responsibility of offering some concrete suggestions. I am, in fact, so far from being willing to evade major issues at this point, that I express my very strong conviction that more important even than the specific working out of a detailed economic blueprint for society is the matter of getting at some fundamental principles of human behavior. Without the guidance of such basic principles we shall remain in the dark, irrespective of the specific blueprint of action we might wish to decide upon. Such general principles, obviously, are not to be had from the economist, nor

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

even from the ordinary social scientist; they must be obtained from the social and religious philosopher, from the only people, that is to say, who are concerned not merely with actualities but also with ideals, hopes and aspirations. In view of such needs, therefore, it cannot be my intention to refrain from offering some pointed suggestions that may serve as guideposts—even of economic procedure.

For, when all is said and done, it should be eagerly confessed that the kind of religion which we have been seeking is a creative sort of thing, not merely a psychological description of some phase of human behavior. To come back for a moment to the title of this chapter, the real function of religion is conceived not simply in terms of preserving, maintaining or even "saving" the soul, but rather in terms of *creating* a soul. The "soul," the vital spiritual reality of a man's life—and by this I do *not* mean a substantive entity, but a functional reality—is not something which is initially *given* to a man, except in the sense of its potentiality. It is something which each man, in terms of native potentiality, which I assume is his by virtue of his normal humanity, must literally fashion and create for himself out of the experience of everyday life. Such a creative process, it seems to me, is bound to affect every aspect of a man's life, in outlook as well

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

as in action. This, obviously, includes man's economic views and behavior.

The man, then, who would set out to create his soul, to achieve the maturity of his spiritual life, cannot possibly overlook the economic area. He must function in this realm as a creative spiritual personality as surely as in any other. How is this possible?

Again, the answer should not be far to seek. For, if his spirituality includes a vital outlook and dominant principle, it will be natural for him to apply that outlook and practice that principle in his economic relations as inevitably as he would in any other connections of life. Again, the creative character of his spiritual commitment will be largely determinative of how he views economic procedures and principles. From this vantage ground he can neither approve of any economic principles nor be a willing party to economic procedures which treat this aspect of the life of man as merely an end in itself without regard for man as a spiritual personality. Rather, he must assess all principles and procedures from the point of view of their effect upon individual men and upon society as composed of such spiritual persons. Nor is this all. It is not enough either to assess or to condemn. So far as in him lies he must incessantly work for a way of looking upon economic issues and for a type of economic order which treat human persons as ends and

CAN WE "GAIN THE WORLD"?

make use of principles and methods only as means to their welfare. As a spiritual person, he cannot be satisfied with working for these advances simply for the benefit of those persons who happen to be members of his own particular family, clan, social stratum, class, corporation, working group, state or nation. Being himself a spiritual personality, he must of necessity recognize the presence of spiritual personalities wherever he may find them, irrespective of nation, creed, class or race. In harmony with this principle, he will erect no economic wall around any particular group. If on this ground he must reject the economics of any capitalism which exists only for the gain of those who already "have" at the cost of the exploitation of all the rest, he must on the same ground reject any proposed dictatorship of the proletariat or of any other special class. Spiritual personality being as broad a term as is that of humanity itself, his concern with the economic welfare of persons cannot fall short of an inclusion of all mankind in the application of spiritual motivation to the material life of men. In brief, it means that he can be no more geographically minded in his view of economics than in his view of religion. And this all the more so since, as I have insisted throughout, it is impossible to separate these human interests and needs into airtight compartments. The spiritual man will, therefore, accept John Wesley's

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

motto, "The world is my parish," not only for its religious inclusiveness but also for its economic vision.

Thus the salvation, the creation even, of our "soul" is in a real sense tied up with the salvation of our economic life. Man's redemption concerns the whole man, and only in so far as he can give himself to the progressive reconstruction of every vital aspect of his life can he hope to develop that soul which marks the noblest achievement of his creative powers. In this progressive achievement both he and the world will gain, though he should "lose the world" in the process. In *Lovers of Life* Edwards Davis puts it in his incomparably beautiful way:

By new experience

Behold, this vibrant con-echoed Truth,
That not of fading stuffs, carved stones, nor spires,
Idols, gold pavements, pearly gates to towers;
Not of such substance as these are that fade,
Or tarnish, or-corrode, for which blind thieves
Break through to steal—reward is where Mind moves
Created and creating to behold
God's beauty everywhere where beauty is.

III

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

*All Social Schemes, all Planned Economies,
All specious blue-prints of man's Ideal States,
All vain attempts at just Democracies,
Utopias, or Cities of High God
Have failed—and must for long time fail—for lack
Of only one essential thing, enough
Just men and true to make Peace possible.*

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

PATRIOTISM and religion have been linked, in one fashion or another, many times in human history. It is not very often, however, that we are confronted by them in the form of a paradox. For the most part it is simply taken for granted that patriotism and religion go hand in hand, since each constitutes one of the major inner commitments of man. That there could be an incongruity between these two great emotional forces does not seem to enter most people's minds. Yet our question is, I think, not only important but inevitable. The paradoxical way in which the issue is framed is neither accidental nor simply a matter of making the subject fit into the general scheme of these lectures. Rather, as we shall have abundant opportunity to observe, some such manner of putting the question is

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

forced upon us by existing facts in these two areas of human life.

Moreover, a sane and rational discussion of this question demands, on the part of writer and reader alike, a goodly dose of the open-mindedness for which we have made our plea in the first chapter. If, in rejoinder, we are told that we have no right to such a state of mind in respect to patriotism and Christianity, since both are entirely too "sacred" to be probed, it should at least be suggested that open-mindedness is clearly a virtue only in those realms where it is most natural for a man to be closed-minded, as, for example, in his religion, in his patriotism, in his economics, in his politics and in other areas of immediate vital concern to himself. There is little virtue in being open-minded on matters which amount to nothing anyway or where man's knowledge is so inadequate that nothing definite could be said at all.

Perhaps the best initial approach to our problem is by defining our terms. It may be taken for granted that the definition of patriotism as "love for one's country" will be both satisfactory from the standpoint of etymology and also pass muster as, in general, an adequate description of its nature. Nor is it very likely that anyone could reasonably object to the proposition that a Christian is one who, as a professed follower of Jesus of Nazareth, stands committed to the fundamental

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

principles of the Nazarene, as these may be found not only in such a statement as the Sermon on the Mount—which, in my opinion, has rightly been called “the Constitution of Christianity”—but also in the general attitude expressed by his life as that is known to us.

If we agree to these two statements, we are at once driven to startling conclusions. So far as my reading of the Sermon on the Mount or my knowledge of Jesus’ life and attitude serves me here, I can see no justification whatsoever for setting patriotism and Christianity in juxtaposition to each other. From this point of view, therefore, the way we have put the issue of our discussion is a false antithesis. The answer to the question is simple enough: Of course, we can be both patriotic and Christian!

How comforting it would be if we could leave the problem here! Or, still better, if it could truthfully be said that the question never presented a real issue. Before we can leave the matter this way, however, we must face two factual difficulties; difficulties which give the subject a completely different complexion.

The first difficulty consists in the fact that our average patriot is by no means satisfied with our definition of patriotism. “Love for one’s country” is far from being sufficiently concrete to suit him. Such a love may be a mere inner emotional attitude; it is something, therefore, the presence or absence of which another person

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

has no method of determining. If the matter were left here, we should have to believe anyone who happens to assert his patriotism, since, obviously, we have no way of looking into his inner life in order to find out whether he harbors a certain attitude toward his country or not. The only way we have of judging a man's patriotism, therefore, is to see it in its outward demonstrations. No fault, I think, can be found with this demand, either in the factual data on which it is based or in the logic which develops it. Our patriot has just as much right to demand the external expression of one's love for one's country as the author of the epistles of John had a right to his assertion that one's proclaimed love for God be "proved" by one's love for men. The trouble begins only when you inquire into the nature of the demonstration wanted by our patriot. At this point it may be quickly discovered that the evidence of "love for one's country" for which the self-conscious patriot is looking lies not so much in positive deeds in behalf of one's country as in negative attitudes toward most other countries. More particularly, there seems to be desired a vociferous and violent antipathy toward any countries which at the time may be considered specifically dangerous, such as was the case with Germany in 1917-1918 and for many years after the World War, and such as is now the case in respect to Italy and Germany, Japan and Russia.

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

The other difficulty which stands in the way of the very neat solution of our problem is to be found largely on the other side of our paradox. A close analysis of the behavior of Christians down through the centuries must all but convince one that as soon as any actual or supposed conflict with patriotism has arisen, Christian principles have almost always been interpreted to suit the particular occasion. Christian principles have hardly ever, *per se*, been permitted (even by the Church itself) to be applied to the judgment of the actions of the state or nation as such. This has been more especially true, we are saying, at any moment when there has actually or apparently developed a real conflict between the claims of the state and the principles of Christianity. As soon as a question of "national right" or "national welfare" has been concerned, Christianity has, for the most part, abdicated in advance in favor of the state.

One could only wish that, in illustrating such contentions, one might have to go further than is actually necessary. Most of us can still remember back as far as 1914-1918. It is not debatable that during those years of the World War both sides to the conflict made constant and very large use of the power and influence of the organized Christian church; each side succeeded in getting from its organized bodies of Christians almost unqualified approval for the monstrous

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

mass murder. Very early in its development the war was declared by Christian officials on opposing sides to be a "holy war." From pulpits the war challenge, *Deus Vult!* was proclaimed. Each belligerent sent its soldiers to the front with the official blessing of the Christian church not only upon their heads and hearts but upon their bayonets and bullets. If one is inclined to be spiritually optimistic as to the allegiance of most Christians in the event of what is proclaimed a "national crisis"—whether the loyalty is first to Caesar or to God—a reading of Ray H. Abrams' thoroughly documented story of *Preachers Present Arms* would be a saddening antidote. One who still loves the Church, in spite of her faults, will find more damaging evidence in Dr. Abrams' revelations than can be faced pleasantly. His stories are not the exceptions which prove the rule. The evidence is incontrovertible that what Abrams presents to us in his devastating pages constitutes the general and official practice of the church, not an exception. It should be added, moreover, that any youthful idealists or older enthusiasts who are today inclined to say: "Christians and especially Christian leaders may have been deceived once; but this will never happen again! They are too keenly aware of having been 'taken in' once to allow themselves ever to be fooled again"—such people who feel and express themselves in this fashion today should be solemnly warned. It is very likely that

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

those who talk in this way are already engaged in the process of being fooled. The World War was not the first war in human history! The Christian church had seen many wars before that one, and it has ominously blessed a long line of conflicts. Christian leaders have been caught unawares over and over again. The fact that they were almost without exception caught in 1914-1918 is itself nearly conclusive proof that they will be caught again when the next occasion arises. To suppose otherwise is to close one's eyes foolhardily to the obvious facts.

It is, indeed, not even necessary to go back as far as the World War. Our own days are furnishing obvious and concrete evidence of the sad truth of these assertions. Already the peace groups in this country are pathetically divided in their judgments as to the means of achieving their goal. What is still worse, even the actual pacifists in our midst have recently split in half over the issue of method. Many who were until lately committed to an absolute pacifism have come out today with the claim that peace can be achieved and preserved only through drastic—yes, even forceful!—measures. So that once again we begin to hear from even the most peace-minded people in our midst the slogan: Save democracy by the use of force! That is the way to have another “war to end war.” Who, in the light of these facts, which can be verified right now,

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

still has the courage to assume that mankind has "learned its lesson" or that "our religious leaders will not be fooled again" or that "we shall never again go to war to 'make the world safe for democracy' "?

The reason for all this is not far to seek. It lies in the fact, already alluded to, that the emotional depth of most men's patriotism is greater than the depth of their religion. We may not like to hear this proposition, but, in the light of the general facts of the case, it would be sheer folly to deny it.

Let us, however, return once more to the former of the two difficulties I have mentioned. In terms of it let us ask: What does patriotism mean?

In order to obviate any possible misapprehension at this point, let it be said at once and in the most categorical fashion: I, too, do not think that mere verbal claim of "love for one's country" is enough.

What, then, is enough?

In order to get at this matter as clearly and as accurately as possible, let us approach the problem by taking our first illustrations from abroad, from sufficiently far away, that is to say, to enable us to see the issue without being blinded by too strong an emotional response.

In my own native country, Germany, "patriotism" is today being defined as *unquestioned acceptance of and absolute loyalty to the Nazi regime*. Anyone who dares to disagree with the acts or with the policies of the

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

Nazi government is considered a traitor; and, if his disagreement becomes known in official quarters, he is dealt with as such. The acts and policies of the government are sacrosanct. They are not subject to review by anyone. Still less are they subject to criticism of any kind, whether public or private. The reason is obvious enough. In any Nazi or Fascist state *the government itself IS the nation*. Disloyalty to the government, therefore, is disloyalty to the nation. In such a regime the patriot is the thoughtless, brainless "yes man" who accepts the government as sacrosanct and, therefore, as wholly beyond not merely correction or criticism, but even beyond questioning. Moreover, from this point of view, anyone who does *not* accept this position is, to put it mildly, *ipso facto* unpatriotic.

Now, if these things are so—and certainly as a native-born German (and with not a drop of Jewish blood in my veins) I would be the last one to want to caricature the situation in Germany or to wish to paint the picture any darker than it is—then any rational person should be able to see that the paradoxical way of putting our question is neither artificial nor idle nor insulting. Rather, it presents a very real issue and springs from a most pressing problem. For it is easy to perceive that no one who takes seriously the Christian position, the Sermon on the Mount, can, in the present Italian, German, or, for that matter, Russian sense, be

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

both "patriotic" and "Christian." At the heart of Christianity there stands the sacredness of individual personality. At the heart of all types of Fascism there stands the sacredness of the state. For the follower of Jesus, institutions, including not only the church but also the family and the state itself, exist *for the sake of man*. For the followers of Mussolini and Hitler every institution and every individual member of every institution exist *for the sake of the state*. To the Fascist the state is God! Moreover, like the God of the ancient Hebrews, the Fascist's god is a "jealous god"; he will have no other gods before him! The opposition between the two attitudes, the Christian and the Fascist, is too clear-cut to need further elaboration. There is no possible way of reconciling such absolutely contradictory positions. Each is the antithesis of the other.

It is interesting, in this connection, to note that both sides to the present church-state controversy in Germany are becoming increasingly cognizant of the unalterable opposition between their forces. Let it forever be said to the praise of a small but vigorous minority of German ministers that they were the first to discern the basic reality of the contradiction. What is more, they not only saw it, but they dared to act upon their Christian duty. In season and out they have freely spoken their minds from their Christian pulpits, just as long as they were not denied their pulpits, or put into

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

concentration camps or murdered by the state. In comparison to the total number of Christian clergymen in Germany—both Protestant and Catholic—their number has been small; but their voice has reached into every corner of Germany, yes, into every country of the world.

The recognition by the Nazi government of this unalterable opposition has been more slow in coming. For one thing, a vast number of Germans, both in the pulpit and in the pew, did from the very inception of the Nazi regime what has been all too generally the practice of Christians down through the centuries: they forsook their Christian convictions and principles—if they ever really had such—at the first crack of the government's whip. As a result of this, Nazi officialdom felt that it had nothing to fear from the side of the German churches; it could use, control and direct them in behalf of "National Socialism" just as the former empire had been able to handle them and to get from them practically unanimous support of the war. In case harmonizing the Christian religion, as it might be normally understood, with the principles and practices of National Socialism, as these might be carried out, should finally become too incongruous, the new government felt quite confident that then it would be able so to redirect or even change the religion of the churches as to bring them into line with the Nazi ideals

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

and program, and perhaps even to make them instruments for the furtherance of the regime's purposes. Had not the churches always permitted themselves to be used in the interest of the state? And does not the history of the church testify to its willingness to adapt itself to its environment?

The greatest annual festival of Christianity, Christmas, could be taken as eloquent evidence of the ability of the church to accommodate itself. The Yuletide tree, with its tinsel and decorations, had been an ancient Teutonic custom long before Jesus was born. Had not this ancient pagan symbol been successfully incorporated into the life of Christian people? Rather than make too much of a break with the Teutonic calendar, had not the Christian authorities actually adopted Yuletide as the festival on which to celebrate the birth of Christ? Indeed, too, all the rest of Christendom had taken over both the Teutonic festival date and the equally Teutonic yuletide tree! With such a record in the past, why should not today's German Christianity easily and readily accommodate itself to the demands of the new Teutonic order? So much was this taken for granted that, from the very beginning of the Nazi regime, the world began to hear of "*German* Christians." Soon the government felt free to set up its own political appointee, a *Reichs-Bischof*, whose function was not only the supervision of the work of the churches but the

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

direction of their activities, not from the point of view of Christianity nor even of religion in the large, but from that of the political and social requirements of the state.

To the eternal glory of Germany's Christians it must be said that, up till now, the most vocal, fearless, and persistent opposition which the Nazi regime has found, its only noticeable stumblingblock in the way of absolute domination, has been the Christian church, both on the Catholic and on the Protestant side. Moreover, despite the comparatively small number of dissenters, they have been sufficient to give the government some discomfort and to make the opposition of the church a real danger to the state's program. As a result of this four-year-old battle, it is probably correct to say that Germany's leading Nazis have by now recognized that their goals can safely be realized only by getting rid of Christianity. So they have recently begun a definite nationwide propaganda against Christianity itself by railing against "this Jewish religion," feeling that enough virulent anti-Semitism has already permeated the rank and file of the German people to discredit Christianity itself because of its Jewish origin and history. The incongruity of these recent tactics with what is perhaps the classic piece of earlier Nazi propaganda and logic does not seem to trouble the mind of the Nazis. I refer to Goebbels' famous assertion: "Jesus was

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

not a Jew. I do not have to prove that. It is a fact." If the martyrdom of Christians is to be repeated in the Germany of the twentieth century, we may be horrified at such a reversal of history and return to barbarism, and our hearts may go out in profound and sincere sympathy to a people so terribly afflicted; but more than anything else, let us be thankful that all heroism has not yet died out in humanity and that there are still persons in our midst who prefer death itself to cheap cowardly compromise when it comes to the greatest objects and deepest sources of their spiritual commitment.

It would be difficult to find a better illustration than is found in contemporary Germany of the fact that it is as impossible to serve both "God and Caesar" as to serve both "God and Mammon."

The rejoinder to all this will be: "We do not live in either Germany or Italy; we are neither Nazis nor Fascists; this is America. What does all this have to do with us?"

No reader of these lines can possibly be happier than the writer over the fact that—as yet, at any rate—we are neither Nazis nor Fascists. It should be one of our proudest boasts, as American citizens of today, that in the United States there remains some semblance of democracy and there exist genuine attempts to maintain it, even to improve it. Such a boast does not mean that one

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

need be either willfully blind or callously indifferent to the numerous shortcomings which characterize our own, as indeed every actual, attempt at democracy. With all such faults—though their number be legion—democracy would still appear to be, so far as I can see, the only form of government which is worthy of man; for, among the forms of state structure yet devised, it alone, in its frank recognition that political authority must be derived from the free and willing “consent of the governed,” acknowledges the ultimate significance of the individual human personality and makes his welfare the end and goal of civic institutions. Again, I am not saying that this end, even by democracies, is always clearly kept in view, much less always actualized in practice. Yet the official commitment to that ideal even *as* an ideal, in such a day as this, is something for which one can but be profoundly thankful. This is so true that the author, in the more than twenty-four years since he first set his foot on American soil, has never been more proud nor more grateful for his American citizenship than he is today.¹

Yet, such outbursts of justifiable American pride must not be permitted to deceive us into believing that

¹ Moreover, as against the proud boast of those native-born American citizens whose citizenship in the United States is, after all, only the result of place of birth over which they themselves obviously had no control, the author, with many others who have been naturalized, happily points to his citizenship as the result of his own intelligent choice.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

patriotism in the United States is not beset by any of the dangers which are so clearly evident in Germany and Italy, in Japan and Russia. Coming to such an optimism would involve culpably closing our eyes against existing facts. To refuse to recognize the dangers besetting our own country would surely be far from rendering it that service which a true patriotism rightly demands of us.

The first fact which clamors loudly for recognition is that *the same basic mentality* characteristic of the Italian black-shirt and the German brown-shirt movements is present in every modern nation in which superpatriots delegate themselves to define the "love of country" as an exclusive, instead of an inclusive, attitude; in which, more specifically, the degree of the hatred one harbors for, and intensity of the invectives one hurls at, certain other states are the indices of the devotion one has to one's own; in which patriotism, I am saying, is not so much a positive thing of love and of service at home as it is a definitely negative and ferocious response toward every foreign nation; in which, we must add, even the positive love for one's country is measured by the touchiness with which one guards and the stupidity with which one accepts the *status quo*² in the homeland. It is the type of mentality

²In the light of existing economic conditions it still appears that the best definition for the *status quo* was given by the Negro preacher who informed his congregation that the *status quo* was "the hell of a mess we's in."

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

which immediately brands any criticism of the existing social, economic, civic, political or national situation as unpatriotic and dubs the critic himself a "red," a "bolshevik," an "anarchist," a "Communist"; which treats him as "dangerous" and labels him with any other epithet that bears a dark stigma. Probably those among the superpatriots who could define the real meaning of any of those terms are rare.

It would be absurd to claim that no such superpatriots live in Greencastle, in Evanston or in the United States; that we have to go all the way to Germany or to Italy to find them. We all know better. There are in America entire organizations which have set themselves little other purpose than to be the watchdogs for just this kind of "patriotism." There is a large portion of our press which has nothing better to do than to inflame the public passions against other peoples by the development of this brand of "patriotism." We have groups who are known and notable only (1) for the valiant revolutionary activities of their forebears one hundred and fifty years ago, and (2) for their frenzied endeavors to oppose similar activities today by putting upon their infamous "black lists" every thoughtful American who has a constructive idea in his head. With the names of John Dewey, the late Jane Addams, Bishops McConnell and Oxnam, Ernest Fremont Tittle, Reinhold Niebuhr, Sherwood Eddy, Kirby Page and many such

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

others upon them, these black lists constitute the most enviable roster of America's foremost thinkers, leading spirits and greatest divines! Moreover, St. Paul, St. John and Jesus of Nazareth himself are missing on these lists only because they had the misfortune of having been born a few centuries too soon! If these lists demonstrate anything at all, they prove that anyone who dares to take seriously the Christian principles of "world brotherhood" and of "love even for the enemy" is bound to be regarded in a heinous light by the self-elected guardians of our "patriotism."

Nor dare we forget that the directors and stockholders in our international armament combinations are among the loudest shouters for "patriotism." As the Nye Senate Investigations brought out, arms manufacturers will sell their nefarious products to anyone who has the price, even though the materials be used in turn against their own fellow citizens. Yet these international merchants of death seem to find no incongruity in their occupancy of official positions in all denominations of churches. On six days out of every week, they bend all efforts to manufacturing as much death-dealing material as possible, to inflaming the international sore spots, and to keeping the markets for armaments wide open; on Sundays, they pretend to worship the Prince of Peace. It should not be difficult to see that as long as war remains the "world's great-

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

est collective sin," such duplicity of attempting to serve God and Caesar simultaneously, should be recognized and called what it is: the world's most heinous hypocrisy of our twentieth century. Frankly, it is not at all surprising that people who calmly and without any evident compunctions of conscience can eat their daily bread out of the blood money of their fellow men find it not only convenient but actually necessary to hide behind the claims of one hundred per cent patriotism. It was Samuel Johnson who several centuries ago discovered that "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." One cannot hope to improve on Sam Johnson's inimitable sayings. I shall only stop to add that, as in so many other instances, Dr. Johnson's remark contains far more truth than humor.

In the light of such facts, would one care to maintain that our question: Can we be patriotic and Christian? is a purely academic, a futile, or even an insulting question? Should it not rather be granted that it is one of the major practical questions of the hour?

More illustrations are superfluous. One could make a tedious and painful list. We might just as well face the issue, which by this time is rather obvious. There is nothing in the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount which would make possible a harmonization with the "patriotism" of our own self-styled "superpatriot." As in the case of the fascists, Spiritual Christianity and

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

such nationalism are too antithetical to allow the same person to be both a real Christian and a "patriot."

This, however, cannot be the final answer to our question, although with reference to the kind of patriotism thus far discussed it *must* be final. I deny, nevertheless, that what these superpatriots and "one hundred percenters" define as "patriotism" is either the real thing or worthy of any decent American.

Patriotism is, indeed, the "love for one's country," and no man who does not love his native or his adopted land is worth his salt.

Yet it simply is *not* true that one's love for one's country must show itself in the hatred of other peoples or in blind acceptance of everything that exists at home. As against the former claim let it be noted that a hatred of others, so far from being a real guarantee of love for one's own country, offers only the most unequivocal proof of smallness and narrow-mindedness—characteristics which are, to say the least, undesirable in the true patriot. Rather it is the man whose outreach of sympathy and understanding is broad and big enough to include in his affections even his enemy—it is this man whose love of his own country is something more at best than a dull prejudice, or at worst than a convenient cloak behind which to hide his wholly unpatriotic deeds of individual self-aggrandizement. The man whose love is so narrow that it can enfold only his

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

own immediate circles, is neither deep nor rich enough to be trusted to be wise even within those circles. How beautifully our own Edwin Markham has put this in his unforgettable quatrain:

He drew a circle that shut me out
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout:
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.

Edwards Davis, thinking along the same line, expresses it thus in *Lovers of Life*:

If I had choice between two tossed-up gifts:
The power to rule a kingdom where hate reigns,
And worth to win the adoration of
A friend, I would not hesitate.

Content's

Fine comradeship in splendid solitude,
And love that understands, forgives and leads:
These I would take, and keep each if I could,
Leaving for morons Mammon's swords and crowns,
And Ares' doles to dupes and simians.

When it comes to the second point, the superpatriot's demand for unquestioning acceptance of the social, economic, political and international *status quo*, we need only to look around, in the past as well as in the present, to find his claim given the lie. Who are the men that are universally acclaimed as the great patriots of all history—and within every country? Are they the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

men who, in their own respective ages, were the passive recipients of outworn and tottering economic, social and political systems? All history gives its unequivocal answer to this question: No! Rather, they were (and still are) the men who, *just because they loved their country*, saw its faults more clearly than anyone else, mercilessly pointed out its weaknesses, and unhesitatingly gave their all in service to the task of making their own a better, a finer, a nobler, a more decent because a more humane land in which to live. It is not blindness that makes the real patriot; it is vision. "Where there is no vision the people perish!" And he who has vision, while with all his heart and mind he sees the ideal future of his beloved fatherland, cannot help seeing the blemishes which mar and disfigure the country of his love. Just because he loves his homeland, he can never be satisfied with any *status quo*, save that of attained perfection—if such a thing were possible for man. It is because of his affection that there looms before his spiritual vision the country that is to be, a land of more profound justice, of deeper human sympathy and understanding, of really practiced (instead of proclaimed!) equality of opportunity for every man. It is this very love in his soul which will not let the vision die nor the dream fade. Despite all the stark realities of the gloomy picture of today, he refuses to

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?
surrender his faith in a better tomorrow and a still better day after tomorrow.

Now such faith would be idle and futile wish-thinking if it constituted all that this patriot contributes to the better country of the future. Faith is essential, but if it is real faith it will find constant expression in deeds and works. The true patriot not only is never satisfied with the existing today, nor content with his faith in a better tomorrow. He puts his shoulder to the wheel in order to do his share to bring about the tomorrow which is to be. The love for one's country—like every other real love—is not a matter of static satisfaction, but of dynamic creation. Not the man who shouts "My country, right or wrong, my country!" but the man who acts on the principle "My country, if right, to keep it thus, if wrong, to set it right" is the real patriot. What all countries need is not people who sheeplike—and just as ignorantly and indifferently—follow any "leader," even into the slaughterhouse, but men and women who thoughtfully and intelligently assess the country's rights and its wrongs, its weal and its woe, its actualities and its possibilities. We need men who, just because they love their country, have the courage to be critical of their country's commitments as well as of its acts, and whose criticism does not end with words but issues in deeds, deeds which shall always be within the framework and intent of the demo-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

cratic process, but which shall none the less do their share in bringing about the better society, the more just social and economic order of tomorrow. Men of such commitments and of such deeds always have been and today still are the true patriots.

How, then, does the attitude and commitment of the Christian fit into this picture? He too, as we have already seen (in the preceding chapters), stands committed to an ideal tomorrow, to a society in which men shall respect one another's personalities and treat one another as brothers. Thus the two forces of patriotism and religion, previously at complete loggerheads with each other, are now seen to join hands in a common cause. The *true* patriot is also the best Christian, for in his dedication to the building of a better and nobler country he is carrying out precisely the idealism of a vitally spiritual and religious point of view. Even as the true Christian should be the best patriot who, in the building of the divine society among men, is obviously helping to create the best and noblest kind of country.

The answer to the question which we have been facing, therefore, depends altogether upon the definition of our terms. As long as we mean by "patriotism" the jealous, narrow-minded, bigoted sort of attitude which not only wants to exclude every other country and people from one's inclusive love, but which is equally as bent upon justifying and sanctifying every-

CAN WE BE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN?

thing which happens to be in existence in one's own nation at the particular time, just so long will it be impossible for the true and sincere follower of the humble Nazarene to be a "patriot." By everything that is good and by every genuine patriot of America's first century and a half as a nation, I deny that such is the nature of real patriotism. At best such patriotism is stupid prejudice, and much of it is villainy or—thinking of Johnson again—"scoundrelism." On the other hand, if patriotism is defined as that "love of one's country" which is inclusive and broad and which is measured by its devotion to the building of a better land and a better people, if, in brief, patriotism is not a commitment to the *status quo* but a commitment to the more ideal homeland which we are in the process of creating, then, obviously, patriotism and true Christianity are only two aspects of the same fundamental kind of dedication.

Since both attitudes, moreover, may be admitted to be charged with a high degree of emotional content, they can in a most helpful way supplement each other in the process of achieving their common goal: that of a more noble because more just order of human society. Patriotic Christians or Christian patriots may yet build that fairer order of human brotherhood which was the very heart of Jesus' message and the inspiration of his life.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

The author of *Lovers of Life* puts it, in this unforgettable passage, as follows:

. . . they who hired the Mechanists
To manufacture Holy Grails to meet
Dour competition's bid, hired those same dupes
To build War's vicious ships to soar the skies;
Or lurk, titanic, on and underneath
Dark seas, with avarous destruction as
The test of militant approval; or
With Hell's demoniac assistance bribed
Its praised degenerates of Science to
Compound a more mephitic venom than
Vile mad-born Cerberus had vomited.

This, I learned when Agamemnon failed! When
Greed had gorged itself on golden loot until
Great Mammon died, and Surplus Wealth became
Annihilated by the grimed defeat
Of its dependent enemies. Then "Peace,"
The war-ghosts pled! Another Armistice!
Some even argued for Disarmament,
That it might be a smoke-screen for intense
Preparedness. For what? Another War
For lasting Peace? Through Caesar or through Christ?

Hail, then, O new-world of an age to be,
If that new world is ever, hail, all hail,
The unknown, unappreciated God
Of Tenderness! That power superior
When worshiped and obeyed, shall answer you
Where heartless force omnipotent has failed
Us utterly.

IV

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

*The hungry, the destitute, the scorned
Came, waiting for the Blessed Visitant—
They waited there for Bread, nor manna came,
They waited there for Wine, and thirsting fell,
They waited there for Balm of Gilead—
And died blaspheming opulence that built
With tainted lucre, towers shadowing
The blood-stained ground where golden crosses glowed
As ironies on Mammon's unemployed,
Out—not for wavers fit for babes, nor blood—
But breads and meats and work to pay for beds. . . .*

*Need we another Sermon on the Mount
Since we have spurned the lesson of the first? . . .*

*He sees not evil anywhere in life,
Who is a comrade of all wanderers—
And all are wanderers returning home. . . .*

*I see in Man both fool and friend,
You being pure behold a God in him.*

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

LIKE most religions, Christianity is a religion of salvation. The Christian "gospel" is the good news of salvation in and through Jesus Christ. From the beginning it has claimed to be "good news." It is only legitimate to ask: "Good news" of what and for whom? If, in reply, it be said, "The good news of salvation through

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

Jesus," we are bound to inquire further: What does this mean?

It is true, of course, that most *official* "Christians" would consider this last question superfluous. Every Christian knows what "the good news of salvation through Jesus" means. Even if one were inclined to agree with this judgment, one could but wonder how the fairly recent quarrels within the church concerning the so-called "social" and "individual gospel" are to be explained. If everyone knows just what the good news of Christian salvation is, how is it that within Christianity itself this problem of the social and individual gospel has arisen?

It will be said at once that, sad as may have been the fact that this difficulty should ever have arisen in the Christian church, it is now out of date, since it has long since been settled.

I must admit that I am not sure about this so-called "settlement." In the first place: *How* has it been settled? After this question is answered we may discover that what is hailed as a "settlement" is no solution at all or, at any rate, not the right solution. It has been "settled" in three different fashions. First of all, there is still a group for whom so-called "social salvation" is the only *significantly* Christian salvation. Secondly, there appears to be a steadily growing group for whom the treatment of the problem consists of a change from

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

the "either—or" to the "both—and" position; a group, that is to say, who feel more and more that the opposition of the two kinds of salvation is a falsification of the Christian principle and program, since Christian salvation is always *both* individual *and* social. Finally there is the third—and, I fear, still by far the largest—group for whom Christian salvation always has been and is today purely individualistic, the salvation of the individual sinner from the guilt and power of sin, from the bad influence of this earth and *for* the next world.¹ As long as these three groups still continue to exist, it would seem premature to speak of a resolution of the issue. What usually is meant by such a claim, of course, is the fairly rapid growth of the second of these groups. The fact that an ever larger host of Christian men and women are frankly admitting both the individual and the social aspects of the Christian gospel is widely hailed as a great victory for a more complete interpretation of Christianity and is therefore, perhaps too easily, looked upon as the rapidly proceeding "settlement" of the original dispute.

Now I hold that there are good reasons for doubting that the problem could rightfully be regarded as settled *even if* all so-called Christians could come to an

¹ Professor Albert E. Avey, as short a time ago as 1936, categorically, though by no means approvingly, asserted: ". . . after all, it is generally held, salvation is an individual affair." *Re-Thinking Religion*, p. 161.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

agreement on the "both—and" position. I do not deny that this position marks a decided advance over the previous unconciliatory "either—or" positions. It does not, however, appear to me to be true that even the so-called conciliatory point of view is sufficiently clear on the nature of Christian salvation. In so far as it merely accepts the proposition that the Christian "good news" has very definite redemptive implications for both the individual and for society in all its complexity, I have no objection. But does this really solve the problem of the actual nature of Christian salvation? That remains to be seen.

Inasmuch as what we are considering is *Christian* salvation, it would seem to be only natural to turn to Jesus himself. What, according to him, was the "good news?" Here is his own announcement on this subject:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

I cannot do better, at this point, than to give to this famous declaration of purpose as set forth by Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth the excellent interpretation which E. Stanley Jones has offered:

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

1. Good news to the poor—the economically disinherited.
2. Release to the captives—the socially and politically disinherited.
3. The opening of the eyes of the blind—the physically disinherited.
4. The setting at liberty the bruised—the morally and spiritually disinherited.
5. The Lord's Year of Jubilee—a new beginning on a world scale.²

Such, I quite agree with Dr. Jones, was the nature of Jesus' "good news," such the meaning of his offer of "salvation." Salvation, that is to say, for everyone, who for whatever reason, or from whatever attitude or condition or situation, needs salvation.

Now the extraordinary thing in this declaration of the Nazarene, in this his own description of the nature of his "good news," lies in the fact that, if Mr. Jones' interpretation is valid, it contains not one reference to what has been universally proclaimed throughout the Christian centuries as the nature of this "good news," a salvation which amounts to nothing much more than a celestial life-insurance policy or a fire escape. Throughout those centuries we have been so preoccupied with trying to "save" people from what we have called "eternal damnation" that we have had nor eyes nor ears nor hearts nor minds to be concerned with the multitudes of our fellow citizens who are damned

² E. Stanley Jones, *Christ's Alternative to Communism*, pp. 41-42.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

right here and now. In other words, religion has been entirely too long a matter of *escape*, even as the escape has been too often one from "fire and brimstone." There is nothing of all of this in Jesus' Nazarene declaration of purpose. In the light of the almost exclusively individualistic tenor of the Christian gospel-message for so many centuries, I call this amazing! He proclaimed "good news" of liberty to "the economically disinherited, to the socially and politically disinherited, to the physically disinherited, to the morally and spiritually disinherited," and he promised this salvation "on a world scale." There is not even an intimation here of otherworldliness, nor an entreaty on his part to his listeners to put up with misery, need, want, despair here and now because of the promise of a "fair hereafter." Rather there is a realistic dealing with the contemporary issues of peoples all around him, and such a frank calling of a spade a spade that even Jesus could not "get by" with it. His own fellow townsmen tried to throw him off a cliff. No wonder! He was altogether too realistic to suit them. That was neither what they had understood by religious salvation, nor what they were willing to take from one of their own boys.

It is seriously to be doubted whether we have made much progress along these lines in the nineteen centuries which have since passed. It cannot be denied, for example, that, until Walter Rauschenbusch came

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

along, only a generation ago, those who had got the realistic significance of the Nazareth declaration had been few and far between; so few, in fact, that it would be difficult to mention one whose name would be familiar to us.³ As in respect to everything else in the New Testament, Christendom got into the habit—centuries ago—of interpreting even the most obviously earthly and realistic utterances of the Gospel in a "spiritualized" (I refuse to call it "spiritual") way. In fact, that process of "spiritualizing" everything in the New Testament has gone so far as to have made out of much of its strong meat and drink mere soup and sugar water. Christianity has had its real drive taken out of it, and yet we wonder why it seems to have so little effect upon our modern life. There is plenty of power in the Gospel, even for today; and the sermon at Nazareth constitutes by no means the least of it.

What if the church of today should everywhere grow seriously interested in the salvation of the economically, socially, politically and physically disinherited and should preach and work for their redemption on a

³This is not to be taken to mean that actually there were no such persons. The Franciscans and Dominicans of the thirteenth century, for example, might reasonably be said to measure up. What fundamentally needs to be kept in mind here is the fact that each generation and each individual man needs to feel himself the agent of the "good news"; otherwise there is a falling back, and conditions grow worse as the discrepancy between the idea of the good news and the existing state of affairs is allowed to grow.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

world-wide scale! That would mean revolution, at least a revolution in the church itself; and such a movement should produce a renaissance the significance of which could not be confined within the boundaries of an institution. I am perfectly aware that there are auspicious signs that the church is now moving in that direction, though one must also admit that it still has a long way to go and that up to the present at any rate the Christian leaders who are definitely and courageously leading toward that horizon are still comparatively few. Yet we should be grateful for such prophets of a new day as there are among us, however few they may be by comparison with the vast multitude.

One must remember, in this connection, that in the summer of 1937 was held the Oxford Conference on "The Church and State." The official declarations of this conference may not have gone far enough to satisfy those of us who have clearly seen the necessarily close connection between religion and all other vital human interests. It is nevertheless true that even as short a time ago as twenty-five years it would have been almost inconceivable for such a conference to be held at all, much less for it to have come to general agreement on any except meaningless points. When it is remembered that at Oxford every important Christian group or denomination—save one—was represented, what is amazing is not that the delegates came to so

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

little agreement and said so little, but rather that they came to so much agreement and dared to say so much which took real courage to declare. On the other hand, we must not let such a notable religious achievement blind us to the fact that Oxford was by no means representative of the thought of either the mass of the clergy or the mass of the laity. After all, it was superior men who went to Oxford rather than representative men. None the less, the Oxford experience may yet mark the beginning of a new religious awakening. This, certainly, is to be most devoutly desired.

Let us, however, return to a further analysis of Jesus' position.

Is it possible to find out just what Jesus' attitude toward "salvation" was even beyond the evidence in the sermon at Nazareth? Perhaps we can find a sufficient answer to this query in Jesus' paradoxical saying: "He who shall try to save his life shall lose it."

How differently *that* sounds from the Christian doctrine of salvation of these past nineteen centuries! We have been taught that we must ever work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. I should not care to assert that the ethical note contained in this injunction is entirely without value. Nevertheless, Jesus says: He who tries to save himself will get lost in the process. I wonder whether two positions could possibly be farther apart than are these two positions. The one

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

says categorically: Save thyself! The other asserts equally emphatically: The surest way to get lost is to get wrapped up in your own salvation. One says: Look out first of all for "number one"! The other says: You will never really find "number one," until you can forget yourself in a cause far greater than yourself! One is an out-and-out appeal to selfishness. The other frankly admits that selfishness lies at the root of all evil. Many of us have had to hear that wholly unabashed appeal to self-interest made in the name of the Nazarene himself: "Be saved tonight, or you might go to hell before morning!" Is it possible to imagine any more shamelessly naked appeal to selfishness than that? Imagine the "good news" of Jesus thus perverted: salvation offered to people in Jesus' name for no more worthy purpose than to save their own little necks! If anything is clear, it should be evident that such a doctrine, whatever else it may or may not be, and in whatever sincere ignorance and with whatever good intentions it may be offered, can never be representative of Jesus' own attitude toward salvation as seen either in his teachings or in his personal example. The two positions are poles apart.

The same attitude comes out clearly in another of Jesus' famous sayings: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers, ye have done it unto me." This is the language of one who is clearly

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

and definitely concerned in even the "least" and the "last one of these" other unfortunate, helpless, exploited, harassed and enslaved ones. How clearly this note harmonizes with the sermon in Nazareth as interpreted by Stanley Jones! Here lies the real secret of the missionary cause and spirit, here also the secret of its power as well as the secret of its successes and failures. Whenever the church has become deeply concerned with the misery and need of "the least of these," at home as well as abroad, it has been easy to develop and maintain the spiritual vitality of believers. For, in their deep personal realization of the great need of others, a need about which they can do something, their own inner life has been strengthened and deepened. In giving themselves to the great task of helping their fellows, they have found quite undreamed-of inner sources of strength. Correlatively, the church has always been at low ebb whenever she has been concerned mostly with the problem of self-preservation—in other words, whenever she found no great task to do for others. When the church has been satisfied with seeing that the wheels of her top-heavy machinery go round, she has lost her vitality and the significance of her message. On losing interest in others and becoming a self-contained "mutual admiration society," she has stagnated and become worthy only of "being trod under foot of men." When she has found causes greater than

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

herself, she has been on the forward march. For even with reference to the church herself it is still true that, in so far as she will "seek to save her life, she shall lose it." This is an axiom at the spiritual level, from which the institution can no more escape than can the individual.

As concerns Jesus, moreover, it is noteworthy that his teachings and attitude were powerfully backed up by his life and activity. It is true enough that we should expect this of him. None the less, in establishing the nature of Jesus' own position toward the problem of "salvation" it should reenforce our interpretation of his attitude on the subject if we can show that his conduct confirms the view that salvation was for him never a matter of self-salvation, but always a matter of saving others. There is probably nothing in the gospel records which brings this fact out more clearly or more tellingly than does the sarcastic remark made about Jesus by some of the sneering mob around his cross: "He saved others, himself he cannot save." I am not so sure but that this remark is the finest thing that was ever said about Jesus, or, for that matter, that could be said about anyone. It may even be the greatest single sentence in all the New Testament. Though spoken by his enemies with a sneer of triumph, I doubt whether any other comment of seven words could have epitomized the story of his life, the content of his teaching,

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

the reason for his suffering and the significance of his death in truer light or in more dramatic outlines than does this vitriolic taunt. What single thing that one could possibly say about Jesus could more graphically picture the life and work of a savior than this sentence: "He saved others, himself he cannot save"? He was so busy saving others, all his days and hours and minutes were so everlastingly occupied with the task of helping men, that he never could find the time to attend to his own salvation or even to give the matter of his own salvation more than a passing thought.

That kind of life of strenuous and endless activity in behalf of needy mankind took a lot of strength and vitality out of him. Nor was he at all unconscious of such departing strength. There were times, therefore, when he simply had to withdraw from the ever-anxious, struggling multitude to recuperate and to regain something of his inner power. No man who never finds time to take in can forever keep on giving out. Yet his days were so busy with this task of helping others that often the only occasions he could obtain for such inner replenishment were in the darkness and solitude of the night. He would go up into the mountain to pray, and more than once he spent the entire night to regain for himself the strength needed to carry on the work of doing good the next day. Yet even such times of silence, communion, inner stocktaking and

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

spiritual replenishment were evidently not times of introvertive meditation or sickly concern with himself. They seem rather to have been times when in the quiet calm of the Eastern night he could see his relation to his fellow men more clearly and gather the needed strength to face the ever-growing demands of the morrow. Witness the subject matter of his prayer in what is rightly called his "high-priestly prayer" (John 17)! It is "they"—his disciples and those who would believe through their words—with whom and for whom he is concerned. "They" and ever again "they"; *not*, as is the case so often with our endlessly repeated "I"! When, moreover, as the result of his "carelessness" about his own safety, he found himself finally—in the Garden and in the subsequent events—confronted by the inescapability of his personal doom, even that fact could not change his fundamental attitude: it was still others with whom he was primarily concerned. That first prayer from his cross: "Father, forgive *them*, for they know not what they do!" "Forgive *them*!" It was still *their* salvation that he was interested in, *not* his own.

Thus the man who preached the doctrine "He who shall try to save his life shall lose it" so completely exemplified his teaching in his actual daily living and practice that even his deadliest enemies had unwit-

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

tingly to sing his everlasting praise under the cross: "He saved others, himself he cannot save."

It is not a little difficult to comprehend how a religion thus started, both by precept and by example, as a religion of the salvation of others, could ever have succeeded in so completely reversing the original teaching and life as to change the tradition into one which, for many centuries now, has been preaching the doctrine of "Save thyself!" Jesus' own teaching and his own example are such a complete refutation of this doctrine that one can only stand aghast before the fact that the "Save thyself" doctrine has since come to be the core of the accepted official Christian position.

It is perfectly true that under the influence of the preaching of the so-called "social gospel" of the past few decades, the slogan has become more and more widely accepted: "Saved to serve," or "Saved to save others." For this we should be grateful. It at least shows a growing recognition of the fact that individual salvation cannot in and by itself be the end of the Christian program. I should, however, venture to say that even this is not yet enough. What, in the light both of Jesus' precept and personal example, seems to be the real truth of the matter is not merely that we are "saved to save others," but rather that *we can find salvation for ourselves only in the saving of others.*

It is also true that the doctrine of Christian salva-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

tion has been filled by many a sincere modern Christian theologian with a much more positive ethical and spiritual content than has here been implied in our critique of a doctrine of salvation largely described as negative, as a mere mechanism of escape, and as an answer to an artificially aroused and synthetically maintained fear complex. It would be unfair and therefore misleading to leave this fact unsaid. Most of our modernistic theologians do not so much look upon Christian salvation as an escape as they see in it "the making of men or, facing the fact of evil in men, their remaking."⁴ We all know that men need to be "made," that "souls" need to be achieved (as we saw in the second chapter), that "persons" are to be "created." Nor, in the light of human misery, needs, suffering, and sin—so much of it caused by man himself!—could anyone seriously deny the fact that men need to be "remade." Yet I must still insist that "salvation" is too generally conceived in individualistic terms, even by progressive religious thinkers. It would still seem to me that personal salvation is more truly an unsought by-product than itself a worthy aim of the spiritual life of man. Personal salvation, like personal happiness, seems to come to him who can forget himself in the achievement of the salvation of others.

Certainly if even Jesus could save himself only and

⁴H. F. Rall, *A Faith for Today*, p. 191.

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

be saved for the world only to the degree to which he was able to save and bring salvation to others, it is difficult to think how the rest of us could expect to get around that law of the spirit. Truly, the "servant is not greater than his master." It is an undeniable principle of the spiritual life that the more a person gives himself to and in behalf of others, the more of a self he has to give. The reason is clear enough. In the process of giving one's self, in the course of daring and doing for others, one is engaged in the creation and growth of the self—without knowing it. Nor is this principle miraculous or even unusual. The same principle holds, after all, to a large degree even in the realm of organic matter. Unused organs and limbs atrophy. Limbs and organs which get an opportunity for work and exercise, on the other hand, show a healthy development and growth. The same principle holds in the realm of the intellect. The minds which become daily more useless are the minds which get no mental exercise, minds which do not choose to take the opportunity of tackling and dealing with difficult intellectual problems. The mind, however, which, though it fail in some specific task, never can neglect such difficult intellectual issues is the growing and evolving mind: a mind which through constant use becomes daily more useful; a mind which, by the sharpness that it must of necessity develop if it would not fail in its under-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

takings, becomes daily more keen until it becomes sharper than a razor's edge. Teeth which get nothing hard on which to chew decay.

Thus it is throughout the realm of the organic. It is only the nonorganic mechanism which becomes duller and duller through use until it finally ceases entirely to operate. Wherever there is life, this law is valid; only use can increase usefulness and only work makes one capable of more work. To save and to hoard is to throw away. He who uses what he has shall have more; whereas he who merely tries to save what he has shall even have that which he does have taken away from him. This is not an intentional punishment meted out by an angry God to hoarding and lazy children of men. It is simply a statement of the law of life, of the way in which natural forces in the organic world operate. So that it remains as true as ever that "he who shall try to save his life shall lose it." If ever we are to be saved ourselves, that fact will be purely incidental to and a by-product of the salvation that we shall have brought to others. There is no salvation of self except in the salvation of others.

Not so long ago a great Christian leader told an audience in whom he was attempting to instill a new missionary zeal and interest: "We have robbed our young people of that sort of challenge which the great missionary cause used to provide for us older people."

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

There is a real element of truth in this statement. It is true that there was a time when the church's great missionary cause offered the one big task which challenged the life of the church engaged in the salvation of others. As such it was far better than nothing. Yet it cannot be denied that the whole missionary task and enterprise, its purpose and *raison d'être* needed very much to be "rethought"—and this not because missions are superfluous, but precisely because of their vital spiritual significance.

The major intent of the above saying, however, seems to me to be quite mistaken. Our contemporary youth may not become passionately excited over bringing a hard-and-fast Christian gospel to the benighted heathen. Their ardor and enthusiasm at this point are considerably dampened by too large a number of considerations which even the most well-intentioned missionary zealot could no longer deny. They remember that wherever Christian nations have carried the good news of salvation, they have sent their merchants and their gunboats right along with the missionaries. They know all too well that for every missionary who went to render real physical, mental, social, and spiritual service to less favored peoples, there went a dozen or more Western economic exploiters to rob those same peoples of their native and created resources. Both groups went as ambassadors of the Western white man.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

Here is the reason why most of the people in non-Christian lands have hardly been able to hear the voices of our Christian missionaries; they were always drowned out by the much larger number and the much more effective results of the economic exploiters. It simply will not do to overlook these all too obvious and, in non-Christian lands, too well-known facts.

Our modern youth has become increasingly aware of these shameful situations. It is true that there probably never existed any actual tie upon any foreign field between missionary activity and economic and political exploitation. Yet the objects of both types of propaganda found it difficult to make the distinction and therefore often resented the one as much as the other. This attitude abroad has had much to do with the attitude engendered at home toward missionary activity. Many of our modern youths never feel quite certain whether the missionary enterprise has been much more than a good smoke screen behind which the most unscrupulous of our Western exploiters have been raking in the almighty dollars for their own private benefit and at a tremendous human cost. Such a feeling is probably quite unjustifiable, but it is not easy to expel it entirely.

Be this as it may, quite aside from these considerations one should still have to take issue with the assertion of the divine mentioned above. "We have

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

robbed our young people of . . . a challenge." I wonder. I wonder whether even in the heyday of the Methodist Centenary Movement, for example, humanity ever faced quite such a challenge as we are facing everywhere today. I wonder whether any Christian martyrs of any age or period ever needed more self-sacrificial spirit, more courage and more daring, than do those of our modern youth who everywhere hear the cry of a destitute, exploited, tyrannized, hopeless humanity! Was the missionary challenge, even in its best days, ever more challenging than is today's growing insistent human demand for *a warless world*? Has the missionary cause a greater appeal to vital red-blooded young men and women than does the rightful human clamor for *a world of plenty, abundance, and of economic security for everyone*? Was there ever more heart throb in the missionary enterprise than there is in the almost unbelievable modern faith of many of the world's best youth in the real possibility of the achievement of *a world of actual human brotherhood* despite the agonizing international and interracial debacles of today? Was there ever a greater faith in any man of missions than the growing faith, which circles the world today, in the possibility of *a world of real decency, of world-wide friendship and fellowship, and of international good will*? What challenge of any age of recorded human history dare we put alongside of

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

such dreams, such hopes, such faith, such aspirations, and alongside the increasing number of courageous deeds and accomplishments in the process of making these dreams and hopes, these aspirations and this faith come true?

Salvation for others? God knows, the world needs salvation! And we know that there is barely an area of human life, hardly an interest of human nature, scarcely a phase of our existence which does not stand in need of salvation. Does today's world, in the light of the barrage of contemporary events, need salvation less than any previous age? Or is not rather every aspect and area of man's life crying out of despair: "Come and help us!"

In a world of broken treaties and armament races, of brutal imperialistic wars, of equally as brutal economic exploitation of the poor downtrodden masses at home and abroad, of hunger and homelessness and increasing unemployment, of thirst for gold and defiance of God, in a world which from every nook and corner, from every need and want of life, cries out of the very depths of despair for help and leadership and guidance and direction and for a sense of purpose—in such a world who is he who still thinks that he can occupy his time with the salvation of his own petty soul, while everything around him seems to be going to smash? Who, most of all, would dare to face such

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

a scene as this in the name of him who, "though he saved others, could not save himself," and turn away from the need of a humanity bleeding out of a thousand wounds, in order to take care of his own private life insurance?

If there are any such among us today, they are *not* our modern youth! Youth today may act sophisticated and blasé. It may give the impression of "the devil may care." It may even—superficially considered—appear callous to the crying needs of this hour. All such appearance, however, is for the most part merely a convenient ruse beneath which to hide their real feelings and commitments. Let modern youth frankly and truthfully face the realities of today's life, in the social world, in the economic realm, in civic life, in politics, in international relations, in race relations, in the world of education and even in that of religion. Let them see some of the naked facts in all these areas and you will also find a group of youthful men and women who in no less determination than did Abraham Lincoln, swear under their breath: "If ever I get a chance to hit these devilish things, I'll hit them hard!" Nor do they calmly and quietly wait their turn. Before they are out of high school or college they are doing their share to make these facts ever more widely known and to rally all sincere and well-meaning men and women to the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

banner of a new crusade: the crusade for "a new world."

In fact, there is more sound reason for hope in this modern crusade of our young Christians than in all the revival meetings of yesteryear or in the evangelistic meetings of today. "Christian Youth Building a New World," while occasionally realizing that the "new world" will, of course, be a better world in which to live, both for themselves and for their children, are yet basically altruistic in their entire aim and motivation. It is the misery, want, destitution and despair of *others* which is sending this Christian youth out on its world conquest. It is not the dream of triumph nor the heroism of battle which entices them. Still less is it any desire of personal aggrandizement or even of personal salvation. The fact is, many of these young people are ruthlessly realistic in their view of what the battle likely has in store for them as individuals. Many of them know only too well that old worlds are not changed or new worlds built by pious fancies or oratorical spellbinding. Nor do they give themselves to the illusion that a seventy-times-seven-repeated march with blare of trumpets around the walls of entrenched power and privilege will cause the walls of greed and oppression, of imperialism and nationalism, of race hatred and other damning provincialisms to fall. They know that they are in for a battle all along the line and for

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

every foot of ground and they also know that all the initial advantages—superficially considered—lie with the well-entrenched enemy. They know that many of them will have to give their lives, actually or figuratively, for the cause.

Yet it is not these facts nor considerations which actuate their commitments or even occupy their minds. It is not with themselves nor with their own fate that they are engrossed. They are reacting to a total situation. True enough, they themselves, their own weal and woe, are involved as parts in that total scene. Yet, I repeat, it is not their own welfare that they have in mind. Their reaction is almost involuntarily wrung from them as they—with the vision of the "Kingdom of God," an idealized humanity, before their mind's eye—look out upon the world that is! The facts of life today are sordid and devilish enough in their own light, let alone in the white light of what rarefied young idealists hold not only possible but believe with Jesus to be an absolute moral and spiritual necessity. These young dreamers somehow dare to take the ideas of Jesus seriously. Is it unfair to them to suspect that they find themselves driven to such a position more by the unbearableness of the conditions they witness in every area of life around them than even by their loyalty to Jesus himself? How, in the light of the devastating picture of modern life, is youth to maintain any faith

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

in itself or in humanity without an almost desperate recourse to some such vision of an ideal humanity as that which possessed Jesus? And how can modern youth be expected to carry on at all, if in the age of daring enthusiasm and courageous commitment we have nothing to offer them but hopelessness and despair?

Facing the plight of men everywhere and in every relationship of life, what shall we expect the attitude of youth to be? A calm looking-on and quiet acceptance of whatever is? If we expect such an attitude either we do not know the nature of youth or else youth today is worse than youth in other generations. Real red-blooded youth does not so easily capitulate, even in the face of what appear like insurmountable obstacles. Least of all, young people who have somehow once dared to dream the dream of a liberated, free humanity. To such youths the apparent obstacles in the way of a realization of their ideal offer only additional challenges to their daring and adventurous undertaking of "building a new world." It is *Christian* youth building a new world! That is, it is the Christian spirit of sympathy with and helpfulness for others at whatever cost to oneself. This *is* the Christian spirit and the *only* attitude worthy of him who, "though he saved others, could not save himself."

It is strange that even upon religious men it should

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

not have dawned long ago that there can be no intended salvation, except that of others! If we cannot save the mad militarists, imperialists and nationalists—even from themselves—it will be useless to try to save ourselves. If we cannot save the economic royalists, the financial and industrial magnates from their own greed, together with us they will share a common doom.

To all this, two objections will likely be raised. In the first place, it will be said that instead of really talking about Christian or even religious salvation, I am merely talking about social, economic, political and racial safety, and that such a sad mixing of totally different matters can only lead to hopeless confusion. In the second place, I shall be told that in placing my emphasis upon the salvation of others it is only by a superficial view that I have apparently got rid of the problem of the salvation of the individual. These objections do, in fact, bring up important considerations.

Both objections raise again the whole question concerning the nature of "salvation" and more particularly concerning the nature of *Christian* salvation. In respect to the second objection, there is little I can do save try to reiterate clearly the position I have been defending. I do mean to insist that, from the point of view of the Jesus I have been quoting and of the only Jesus who for me makes coherent spiritual sense, Christian salvation for the individual is only a supervening by-product

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

of unselfish activity, never a consciously held aim or purposive end in itself. There is a sense in which the individual achieves "salvation" even for himself; but *not*, for the most part, when it is such self-salvation at which he is aiming. I assert this not because Jesus seems plainly to have insisted upon it in his already much-quoted paradox that "he who shall seek to save his life shall lose it." Rather I am confident, as I have previously asserted, that it is a principle of the spiritual life and that it would therefore be just as true if Jesus had never expressed such a thought. The remark itself is a witness to the keenness of Jesus' observation in the realm of the spirit; but the spiritual principle which it asserts was not of Jesus' own making.

In brief, it simply is true that the men and women who have found real salvation—even for themselves—have been those who were too much occupied with the salvation of others and of whole areas of life to be able either to waste any time on themselves or even to worry about themselves. It is a fact of universally observable and verifiable experience that people who get wrapped up in really great and significant causes find their own private affairs, difficulties and even sufferings shrink to insignificance by comparison. At the same time these souls share so completely in the affairs, worries, difficulties and sufferings of their fellows that in others' joy, in others' happiness and in creative

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

achievement in behalf of the great cause they receive their own joy and happiness. How simply and strikingly this truth is put in the Scriptural "It is more blessed to give than to receive!" Precisely! It is more saving to give salvation to others than to receive salvation. None the less, to *give* such salvation *is* "blessed" and therefore has its saving effects even for him who brings it. In this sense, but probably in this sense *only*, am I willing to admit of a Christian significance of "salvation" for the "savior." In other words, saving others does have saving effects upon one's self. Nor is there any denying the fact that the divided and divisive personality of the average man stands greatly in need of the saving, unifying and integrating power which a great overmastering purpose brings to a man.

Such considerations lead naturally to a treatment of the first objection raised above. It necessitates a still more definite analysis of the *nature* of Christian salvation than we have thus far given; although I am inclined to think that whatever may still be said under this head will at least by implication be found in what has already been stated. To begin with, if by "Christian salvation" there be meant merely a mysterious justification of the more or less penitent sinner before a "righteous and just" God, then, it seems to me, the notion is void of realistic implications for the life and conduct of man. I can think of no instance nor even

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

reference in the Synoptics where Jesus is represented as having treated salvation on the level of a bargaining process between God and man. We have already seen the kind of salvation he offered men in the quotation from Isaiah 61 which he chose for his text in the Nazareth synagogue: how he promised "surprising information to those up against it, a let-up to the desperate, the power of overcoming blindness to the blind, and freedom to all those who are downtrodden."⁵ Very real, everyday ills, sufferings and oppressions these were. It was the promise of salvation from all the cramping, oppressing, blinding and killing difficulties to which men found themselves subjected by an inner lack of integration and by an outward essentially unethical social order.

Jesus knew well the needs of men. When he promised men a "more abundant life" he was by no means thinking only of the life of the spirit. I gladly admit that the ultimate significance of life for man, who is after all a spiritual creature, cannot be found at any lower level. When we claim that the "abundant life" had reference also to man's physical, economic, social, intellectual and artistic needs, we are by no means excluding his spiritual nature nor expressing a willingness to put this latter in second place. We are

⁵ I am indebted for this translation of the passage in Luke 4 to Professor William Louis Bailey of the Department of Sociology, Northwestern University.

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

merely insisting that in this, as in the other instances we have noted, Jesus was not thinking of men as disembodied spirits. He wanted and expected men to live abundantly well, and he was well aware of the fact that there were enough, even of the material goods, in this world to make abundance for everyone not only desirable, but possible.⁶ It is impossible, therefore, to deny that by salvation Jesus had also in mind social, economic, political, and racial safety, i.e., just the sort of thing which the objection tried to rule out as having nothing to do with religious, certainly not with Christian, salvation.

At the same time it would be wrong to assume that such salvation has no personal reference. It is at this point where the "either—or" controversy over the so-called problem of "individual" and "social" salvation fails to deal realistically with the issue. The reason why Jesus *is* interested in men's social, economic, political and racial salvation is *not* because he is *not* interested in individual men, but precisely because he is thus interested. He is interested in these social aspects of men's lives because he is interested in men as they actually are, in men where they actually live, and in the whole of man. He came that men might have "life," and that they might have it to the fullest pos-

⁶ This is, of course, *not* to assert that Jesus wanted men to build "bigger barns"; there is, in fact, enough evidence to the contrary. To interpret my remarks above in such fashion is wholly to miss the point.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

sible extent, in every direction, in every area, in all its multitudinous aspects. To save men for such lives, this is what he conceived to be his task. And for such full-orbed, rounded and complete lives men could be saved only if they could be saved *from* small, narrow, divided, shriveled-up, meager, helpless, hopeless and oppressed lives. What could be more obvious than this? Men were to be saved from their passions, from their inner divisions, from their pathetic lack of integration. They were to be saved from all the destitution, oppression and chicanery which have made out of so many lives a mere endless succession of misery, wretchedness, and defeat. Salvation was to take place on every level of man's life, until a man would be able finally to "come to himself," to the better and real self which, potentially, he was all the time, but which somehow had never previously been given a chance to develop. Thus men were encouraged and helped to "find life" and to find it in all its undiminished abundance.

A while back we were talking about "winning a soul," about "creating a self," about "achieving humanity," about "becoming a man." Each one of these phrases is just another way of saying the same thing which in the present chapter I have been calling "salvation." No man is saved in Jesus' sense of the word who is not engaged in the process of becoming a man, of winning his soul. When a man becomes truly hu-

CAN WE "SAVE" OURSELVES AND OTHERS?

man, *he* directs his own interests; they, in their already accepted or predetermined fashion, do not dominate him; he himself, as a rationally reflective, moral, spiritual person, keeps them not merely in constant control, but is ever so ready to redirect and even recreate those interests or construct new ones that the progress of his life will not be impeded by static commitments. This is possible only when, instead of keeping his eyes or mind glued on himself or even on his own "salvation," he can find a cause noble and majestic enough to give himself to it with all his strength of body and soul. For it is in his undeviating devotion to a great overmastering cause, to which he is ready to give his all, that he will be bound to grow in "the inner man." It is the cause which elicits a man's best which also makes the man. Accordingly, it is still true that only in the salvation of others, in the saving and redeeming of all the areas and avenues of human life, is it possible for the individual to achieve his own salvation.

All about us men are demanding to be saved. They need salvation from ignorance, from superstition, from economic exploitation, from social oppression, from political chicanery, from nationalistic provincialism and imperialism, from racial hatred, from physical disease, from inner disintegration, from moral leprosy and from spiritual sinfulness and blindness. Is there

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

anything for us to do? Do men need a religion which promises salvation *from* all these and *for* an abundant life?

In such a world as this one can have no greater desire than so to live life, so to invest his powers and strength, that when it is all over men might feel inclined to say: "He saved others, himself he could not save." The salvation of such a world as ours still appears to me to offer the most enticing adventure to the human soul, that is to say, for that spirit of man which is divine just because, like that of the All-Giver, it gives itself in indefatigable service to his fellows.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

Renunciation of thinking is a declaration of spiritual bankruptcy. Christianity cannot take the place of thinking, but it must be founded on it. . . . It can only attain to real spiritual power when men find the road from thought to religion no longer barred.

I therefore stand and work in the world as one who aims at making men less shallow and morally better by making them think.
 Albert Schweitzer

*Restrain your transient doubt! Let it repose
 In steadfast silence of a valiant heart.
 Your proven Faith needs no defense. It lives
 Or dies in you.*

*He who betrays his Faith betrays Himself,
 And loses all he once adored, betrays
 The brain in him which once possessed a Soul;
 Betrays Mankind, the sacred Universe
 And God! No matter what that Faith is in,
 Though it be but a stone—have faith in it;
 Faith scorned pales Reason to a pedant's guess.*

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

ONE cannot live on a modern university campus without being confronted every day by the supposed antithesis between religion and reason. Not a student conference fails to raise this problem; not a fraternity nor sorority fireside gathering overlooks it. One meets it in the classroom, in the office, in private conversation as

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

well as in public lectures. It is one of the "naturals" on the contemporary campus scene. That this is so is decidedly reassuring.

It proves first that the so-called indifference of our collegians to religion is much more of a pose than a disclosure of their real interests. It proves, in the second place, that our modern youth, so far from being uninterested in the things of the intellect, have made intelligence a touchstone probably second to none. Both of these facts are encouraging to anyone who, in this age of irrationalism, has not yet lost all faith in reason and who, in this age of religious skepticism and indifference, still feels the need for an ethically significant spiritual commitment.

Moreover, if we are honest with ourselves we have no justification for being shocked by the antithetical way in which the question is put to us. It would be useless to attempt to deny that in our own age even more than in the Age of Reason religion has rather widely come to be equated with superstition. To the mind of many of our intellectuals, superstition, magic and religion are merely three different words for the same thing; for a phenomenon, that is to say, which is to be recognized as perfectly natural in the day of man's intellectual infancy, but which, in our day of rational understanding and scientific explanation, is to be seen as entirely incongruous and helplessly passé.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

As if such a view were not by itself enough, it is held that there are still other, and just as damaging, charges to be brought against religion, each of which puts its acceptance wholly beyond the pale for the intelligent and thoughtful modern man. Among these charges we find reference to such facts as: (1) official religion's apparently permanent association with nationalism, imperialism and war; (2) religion's equally tenacious insistence on standing in the way of scientific—and therefore of human—progress, Bruno and Galileo, Darwin and Haeckel coming to one's mind; (3) religion's apparent inability to lead the vanguard of human evolution and its equally apparent willingness to bring up the rear, religion never being ready to change its mind on any subject until it simply must in order to avoid being consigned to the ash-heap of out-moded ideas. Such charges, one will have to admit, are for the most part based on too many historical facts to be waved aside with a mere gesture of the hand.

Perhaps the most serious charge of all has not been mentioned. It is the accusation that, even in a day of crises national and international, racial and economic, moral and spiritual, the official institutions of religion apparently have nothing more important to do than to count up their losses and achievements in the balance sheets of financial success or failure or of increase or

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

decrease in church membership. The church is charged with being far more interested, even in such a period of crisis as this, in its own denominational machinery than in doing something about the sad plight of humanity. Not Nero but the church itself is accused of "fiddling while Rome burns." In the light of the agenda of most church councils or conferences, foolish indeed is he who thinks that these accusations have no basis in fact. Read the final results of their deliberations; then take a glance at the needs of our world as I tried to do in my introductory remarks. What can one in honesty say? Is the socially and spiritually sensitive person not bound to hang his head in shame? No wonder intelligent, thoughtful and sensitive men seem to feel increasingly that not only intelligence and religion, but even morals and religion are antithetical or at least have nothing to do with each other!

It is not as if there were no value in such sessions. One knows that it would be impossible to assemble church leaders for several days or even weeks without getting something of religious worth. In fact, usually there are several addresses of a distinctly high ethical and spiritual quality. The very notability with which such addresses stand out, however, only reënforces the general impression of such conclaves. They are not unfairly characterized by two statements made to the author, one by a prominent theologian and the other

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

by a seminary student after such a council. One said: "What do you expect? A parade never accomplishes very much." The other volunteered the information: "This is the biggest show ever staged by this area of the church!" Another observer, who is greatly respected both as a servant of the church and as an interpreter of rare sagacity was heard to comment after such a recent conference: "If the different conclusions attained by the council were put in algebraic formulae, they would cancel each other out and sum up to zero." This he said in pointing to the freedom with which committees framed their reports. To me it seems more indicative that, rather pathetically, the church as a whole does not know where it is going. I wish to add one more comment, a choice tidbit from a sectional meeting; one of the religious leaders argued in all seriousness and with considerable "religious" fervor: "Let us sound here a spiritual note in order to rehabilitate the financial income of our denominational colleges!" What a travesty on ethical religion in such a day as ours!

In considering the contemporary views of religion, I perceive one more element in the situation which needs to be brought out. Practically universally it is acknowledged that religion is largely, if not indeed exclusively, a matter of the emotions and feelings. As such, it is held that religion, if not actually anti-intellectual, is

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

by its very nature outside the pale of intellectual considerations. It is simply the way a man "feels" toward the universe; it is a feeling which, moreover, is the stronger the more unreasonable it is and the less it can be justified by rational criteria. Consequently, the rational man is obliged to free himself from such an unintelligent way of looking upon the universe.

It is in terms of such accusations and descriptions that many modern men have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to be both religious and intelligent at one and the same time.

Now, in the light of many well-authenticated facts and existing tendencies, it is not possible to push such a position aside as sheer prejudice or even ignorance. Once again we must insist that there is nothing gained either by denying the obvious facts of the case or by conveniently closing one's eyes to them. It is true that this latter procedure is the one most commonly followed by man whenever he finds himself confronted by situations which do not agree with his preconceived ideas or ingrained prejudices.

At the same time, it is just as prejudiced and just as culpable to accept uncritically not merely the "facts" enumerated in the various charges made above, but also the categorical conclusions drawn from them. If it is sheer blindness and folly on the part of the religionist to try to evade the accusations against religion, what

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

is it on the part of the actual or would-be intellectual which permits him to be as dogmatic and unreasonable in his treatment of religion as he charges the religionist with being?

It cannot be denied that no matter how true in their way those accusations may be, to draw from them the conclusions that therefore religion is nothing but idle superstition or sheer emotionalism exhibits a type of confusion, of blindness or of willful misapprehension which are hardly second to that of even the most dogmatic religionist.

To begin with, how intellectually honest is it to throw all magic, superstition, fetish worship and institutionalism into one basket, label the basket "religion" and then kick the basket into its well-deserved oblivion? I am not saying that each of the above charges brought by our intellectuals against religion is of this nature. Our problem would be much simpler than it actually is, were this the case. It is just because there is so much uncomfortable truth to the charges themselves that the conclusions drawn from them give so much appearance of justification. None the less, it would seem only fair to require of the critics of religion that they at least exercise themselves in defining their terms before they so deftly "throw the baby out with the bath."

In other words, if we are going to decide that re-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

ligion is superstitious and irrational and therefore unworthy of intelligent modern men, we should at least know what is meant by "religion"; or, at any rate, what the particular critic happens to mean by the term. It is not that such meaning is not discoverable with comparative ease in the general statements made about the complex phenomenon. For the most part this is all too obvious. What is unfair is the fact that most of the critics do not trouble themselves to indicate that their particular definition might have very much to do with the things they are saying about religion in relation to the present age. It is equally unfair to pick out all the weaknesses, errors, and failures of man, lump them all together, call the aggregate "religion," never informing your reader that this is what you are doing. Nor, it would seem, is it fair to characterize everything which is done by religious institutions as "religion." One may not quite agree with those who feel that the very phrase "religious institution" is a contradiction of terms; but it may, in fact, not be easy to disprove their contention. If, as we have maintained, religion is first a commitment to a great cause and secondly a dedication to a way of life, it is somewhat difficult to see how such a definition could fit an institution. This seems all the more true in view of the fact, to which I have called somewhat detailed attention elsewhere,¹ that the institution—no matter at what

¹ Cf. *Do We Need a New Religion?*, pp. 38-43.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

level or in what particular area—inevitably tends to harden, crystallize, and ossify. If religion be life, an attitude or type of disposition, a spirit—*viz.*, a living, moving, growing, dynamic force—and if an institution be a fundamentally unchanging and static organization (even though it be officially and ostensibly dedicated to the propagation of a vital force), then, obviously, it is most difficult to harmonize these things or even bring them into line.

In the interest of truth, fairness, and the possibility of mutual understanding, it is essential, therefore, that any honest and thoughtful critic of religion tell us what it is that he is discussing when he attacks religion.

Now, what we have a right to expect of others in this regard, we certainly must demand of ourselves. What the final answer to our paradox may be is beside the point. Nor is it a question either of attack or of defense. If the conclusion to which we shall finally come is to have a claim upon the serious consideration of mature men, then we cannot shirk our duty to explain what we mean by "religion" or by "being religious." Without clarifying this term, discussion of the question would be futile, since anything one says on the subject is obviously dependent upon what one means by "being religious."

Theoretically, of course, the same thing could be said about the other major term in our paradox, and the demand made upon us to explain what we mean by

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

"being intelligent." Practically, however, the word "intelligent" can hardly be admitted to be the weasel-word which "religious" patently is. The word "religious" has been required to do duty as a Jack-of-all-trades and is being employed, apparently, by anyone to mean anything he wants it to mean, to make it suit his own purposes. It is not true that the word "intelligent" has suffered from similar idiosyncratic usage. Every grown person, at least intentionally, means just about the same thing by "intelligent," namely, understanding, thoughtful, rationally sound, reasonable, acute, sagacious, wise, shrewd. It is in these same, generally understood, senses that we are employing the word here. Can we be "religious" and, at the same time, be reasonable, thoughtful and wise? That is the question.

What, then, do we mean by "religion"? If it appears somewhat late in our discussion of burning religious problems to raise this question now, let it be said that at each step of my argument I have tried to clarify the particular aspect of the nature of religion which we were at the moment considering. Moreover, in my first chapter I gave a fairly broad and yet definite indication of what I mean by religion.² It is true that the problem of the nature of "religion" has not yet come up in the present direct fashion.

² Cf. pp. 25 ff. above.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

At the same time, what has already been said on the subject of religion must be part and parcel of our answer to the problem here. In other words, religion *is* primarily a matter of inner attitude or disposition (more particularly this as over against the notion that it is a matter either of assent to a creed or of obeisance to a ritual or of membership in an institution). In the next place, it is, as we have seen, an attitude of loyalty or commitment to the highest and noblest, to the greatest cause which one can grasp or understand or of which one can think (and this more particularly as against the idea that religion is commitment to matters of mere historical fact or nonfact). Thus the commitment or loyalty is to a *future* ideal rather than to *past* historical events. What a tremendous difference this makes! It is the difference between a forward-looking and a backward-looking religion—which means that it is a difference between a religion of dynamic idealism and one of static historicism. It is hardly possible to overemphasize the magnitude of this difference or to exaggerate its fundamental character.

Now it is largely because of the refusal of the average modern intellectual to make this distinction that he thinks he is forced to the conclusion that religion is blind superstition. Our intellectual is by no means wholly to blame for this confusion in his mind. In fact, the official institutions and the guardians of religion are

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

largely responsible for this confusion in the modern mind. It is these institutions and their officials which have induced not only their own followers but even the rest of humanity to identify religion itself with the religious institution, with religious dogmas and creeds, and with the claim for the validity of certain asserted historical occurrences which are said to possess a religious character. Consequently, men can hardly be blamed for taking these official teachings as definitive. On this score, then, it has been simple enough for the modern historically and scientifically minded man to discredit such "religion" and to identify it roundly with blind credulity and idle superstition. With equal facility he has been able to point to the "essential" backwardness and backward-look of religion. From such a point of view, religion is essentially retrospective. Note that throughout this discussion I have been insisting upon the essentially prospective character of vital ethical religion.

If, then, we would give a reasonably intelligible answer to the question of our paradox we must first of all disabuse our minds of this wholly unjustifiable identification of religion with what has too long been the nature of the religious tradition: the commitment to a backward look. Whatever else such so-called "religion" may be, and wholly irrespective of the fact that it undoubtedly still holds the inside track among

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

the vast majority of the official institutions of religion, I must insist that it cannot possibly be *ethical* religion. Ethical religion is forward-looking religion. Morality itself is a matter of creative construction. No religion, therefore, which is primarily concerned with and bound to the past—no religion, that is to say, which is more occupied with maintaining its continuity with tradition than with working creatively to develop finer and more unified personalities and to construct the more ideal society of tomorrow—no such religion can, in my humble judgment, lay legitimate claim to being considered an ethical religion.

All this is involved in what has previously been said about the religious nature of one's dedication to a great overmastering purpose. It is implicit in what we have called the cause of Humanity. Here new paradoxes make their appearance. I have previously asserted that no man can claim to be loyal to the cause of humanity who loves humanity only in the abstract. I have insisted, in other words, that real love for humanity must be demonstrated in concrete everyday contact with very real individual human beings and social organizations or groups. Now I must assert equally as emphatically that commitment to the cause of humanity must be as much loyalty and devotion to an unrealized ideal as it must be fair, just and loving treatment of the individual human personality in the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

relationships of everyday life. This also is important. If love of humanity in the abstract is not enough, neither is love of the individual man in the concrete. Each of these attitudes needs to be complemented and completed by the other. Love of humanity in the abstract by itself is empty. Love of the individual human being in the concrete alone is blind. It is blind both to the very imperfect individual as he *is*, and to the personality and social order which we believe *can* and ought to be. The love of humanity, in the large, needs to find its concrete expression in the specific attitudes and deeds of love for particular men and movements. Individual deeds of love, on the other hand, need to be dignified and lifted above the immediacy and passivity of the moment by reference to an ideal humanity in the making.

What I mean by saying that the *mere* loving of a concrete human individual is blind is perhaps best brought out by an illustration. Let us take the case of the unemployed beggar at my door. Charity and the spirit of Christian helpfulness demand that I share some of the necessities of life with this unfortunate fellow man of mine. Millions of religious people, moreover, have for hundreds of years acted on this principle. What is worse, most of these millions have not merely felt wholly justified in thus being charitable, but have prided themselves on their "good deeds." Per-

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

haps they have even felt that by such deeds they were actually buying their way into heaven. It takes very little thoughtfulness to realize how blind such charitable activity is. Engaged in by itself—without reenforcement by the larger vision and commitment to the greater goal involved—it is blind in at least three ways. (1) It lacks vision with reference to the welfare of the beggar himself: by accepting the mere handout of so-called charity his personal integrity and self-respect are definitely damaged. (2) It is blinding even to the giver himself, in that it permits him to slur over the fundamental wrongs in our social and economic order, by salving his conscience through doing such supposedly “good deeds.” (3) It also lacks vision as concerns the welfare of society itself. By taking care of such unfortunate victims of our economic disorder in this purely private and individual fashion we fail not only to put the responsibility where it actually belongs—namely squarely upon the social order itself—but we actually help society to continue in its malpractices by enabling it to evade in a measure the inevitable consequences of its economic misconduct.

If it is asked, as it must be by every sensitive lover of men: “Are we, then, to let the beggar at our door starve to death merely for the sake of the larger good to man in the long run?” the answer, obviously enough,

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

is: No, not at all. I have not the slightest intention of arguing for taking out the sins of society as a whole on the hide or life of any specific "poor devil." All I am saying is this: Of course we must honor humanity in the specific human personality and do all in our power to mitigate his suffering and meet his immediate needs (either individually or still better socially, that is to say, through the right kind of agencies, whether governmental or private); our abstract love of human kind in the large must find its concrete demonstration in helping this particular unfortunate person; if, however, we permit this much-needed and essential, but momentary, act of helpfulness to blind us to the greater issues involved—to the issues, that is, which make the unhappy situation of this particular poor brother not merely possible but inevitable, then, despite the good intention of our specific deed of charity, we shall have done more harm than good. In that case and *only* in that case, by helping the individual we shall have further aided a socially and economically rotten system instead of probing to lay bare its character and working to reconstruct it.

In other words, here again it is not a matter of "either—or," but of "both—and." The individual surely needs our momentary help; we must give it. But it is even more important that the very need of that specific situation shall awaken us to our greater task, namely,

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

that of dealing with an economically and socially unbearable and unjustifiable order and of doing everything in our power to bring about the necessary changes in that total situation. The ideal society of tomorrow must not be forgotten in meeting some real specific needs of today. It is another case of: "These things ye should have done, and not to have left those other things undone." What is more, "those other things," the matters which aim at a fundamental correction of the situations out of which the specific need has arisen, are indeed "the weightier matters of the law"; they are "weightier" just because they are concerned with fundamental principles, and with principles, moreover, which are of as great significance for the life of the individual as they are for that of society.

Religion is a commitment to the highest moral and spiritual values. As such it is an attitude of loyalty more to a method of progress than to a stated or definable goal. The latter is static and therefore inherently suppresses the development of loyalties to newly discerned moral and spiritual values on a higher level. The former, as a dynamic process, contains within it the possibilities of continuous achievement and progress, with no end—of perfection, or of the same thing by any other name—ever in sight. The ideal commitment, in other words, is never a devotion to a statically conceived and specifically defined goal. Rather the

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

goal is itself constantly in the process of undergoing changes; or, putting it in a different way and more precisely, in every new situation, the rationally reflecting, morally and spiritually active mind of the ethically religious person is engaged in the process of constructing new and higher ideals by means of which he may direct and orient his life and conduct.

Commitment, loyalty, devotion; moral and spiritual values; ideal creations! All ideas, these, whose full meaning is conceivable only as being richly charged with emotion. Quite so! It is wholly true that religion without emotion is unthinkable. The critics are quite correct at this point: religion *is* heavily laden with feeling. If this fact in itself makes religious loyalty unintelligent and unworthy of a rational creature like man, then, I fear, there is nothing to be done except to plead guilty and to accept the verdict. We would only ask these critics to be consistent; let them treat emotion in the same contemptuous fashion wherever it appears. In deference to this same charge, they will have to throw out not only religion and patriotism, but love itself. It is little short of amazing how unreasonably these critics of religion can sometimes talk! Casting aspersions upon religion because of its admittedly large emotional tone, they somehow never seem to be aware of the fact that emotion is not, after all, limited exclusively to religion.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

One wonders, too, just exactly what is supposed to be wrong with or unworthy about emotions. Certainly, without emotion life would be very dull indeed. What would life be without its great loves, its great commitments, its devotions, loyalties, values, appreciations, aspirations and ideals? Without these there could, in fact, exist no culture deserving the name. We should have to do not merely without religion and without love, but also without music and drama, without painting and poetry. Does intelligence really presuppose our ridding ourselves of or doing without any and all of these? Merely to ask the question shows the folly of such a notion. Moreover, what would happen in that case, even to our scientists, research workers and all seekers after truth? Is it not true that despite the supposed "objectivity" of our scientists they, too, are driven by their deep interest in and love for their work? Are not the ultimate achievements of men of science in direct proportion to the degree to which their scientific endeavors are guided by a real zest for their inquiry? Nor can it, finally, be overlooked that some of these critics themselves become highly emotional in the expression of their very criticisms!

We undoubtedly shall be told that the thing which makes religion objectionable is not the mere fact that emotion plays such a large role in it, but rather that religion is *purely* a matter of the emotions. In other

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

words, religion is held by the intelligent modern man to be objectionable because in view of its supposed wholly emotional character it leaves no room for intellectual considerations, much less for rational analysis and criticism. The sad fact is that, so far as the general practice of religion is concerned, there is too much truth for comfort in such judgments. It is all too often the case that religion is not much more than an emotional spree by which the individual manages to escape temporarily from the unbearable conditions of his daily existence. In this sense, religion often is a flight from reality which, so far from really deepening and enriching the human spirit and fitting it the better for its tasks, leaves the devotee all the less capable of coping intelligently and resolutely with the daily problems of life. In the measure that this is true, either for the individual or for society, I must concur in the negative objections which are raised against religion on this account.

Here again nothing is gained by futile attempts to evade the facts of the case. "Religion is the opiate of the people," Russian Communists have officially declared. The damaging nature of this slogan is not intelligently met either by hurling damning epithets or by ignoring it with contempt. Who is he who, knowing the facts of the case—not merely in prerevolutionary Russia, but also in postwar America—would dare

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

to challenge the obvious truth of this dictum in respect to much of what goes under the name of religion? From time immemorial religion has been used, whether with full intention or not, to keep men calm and quiet in their ignorance and subjection. In other words, it has been employed first to lull people to sleep and, having thus far succeeded, to keep them in that condition as long as possible. What is still worse, most religious people, even within the so-called Christian tradition, seem to want and enjoy that sort of thing. How many preachers who have really tried their very best to awaken their people out of their intellectual and moral stupor and out of their social and spiritual insensibility have found themselves confronted with the criticism: "We do not want to go to church in order to be confronted with problems! We have problems enough of our own all week long. When we come to worship on Sunday we expect something which will make us forget our miseries and difficulties." If they had the courage to state their real desires, their demands would be seen often to be nothing more or less than that their religion be an opiate, a drug, a soothing syrup, a lollypop. I doubt if there is a Christian congregation from one end of the country to the other which does not contain among its membership a goodly proportion of people of this sentiment.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

If this is true, how far wrong are the Russians with their slogan?

At the same time, the notion that it is of the very essence or nature of religion to be an emotional drug must, indeed, be challenged. True, even ethical religion, as a commitment, is surcharged with emotion. This is hardly in itself justification for jumping to the conclusion that religion is exclusively emotional and therefore wholly irrational. Such reasoning is a *non sequitur*. Of course religion could be neither commitment to a great cause nor devotion to a way of life if it were not heavily laden with feeling. This is far from saying that the commitment and loyalty of religion are emotion pure and simple. Indeed, if a man is "committed" to a cause only as the result of following the line of least resistance, it can be asserted unequivocally that his is not the kind of ideal which is worthy of man at his highest and best. No man who cares for himself as a rational, moral, spiritual being has the right to accept as highest any cause which his best and most mature reflective judgment cannot approve. If he is aware of himself as a moral agent, his reflective reason will be the means by which he will ideally construct the cause to which he can give himself. His reflective reason, therefore, so far from having nothing to do with or no place in his religion, will be the very guide by which he chooses and constructs the

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

object which he deems worthy of his highest loyalty and of his noblest efforts. Does this look as if religion had to be irrational?

It will be objected that this suggestion offers no real escape from the difficulty of our paradox. We shall be told that my phrase "ideal construction" in my suggestion above conceals inadequately the fact that we are still concerned, not with scientifically verifiable data, but with constructions of our imagination. In the realm of the imagination, of course, the emotions are known to run rampant.

This objection is not wholly without foundation. That there is a real difference between science and religion no one in his right mind would care to deny. Science, as we all know, is concerned with more or less definitely verifiable data and relationships among data. Religion, on the other hand, is largely a matter of faith. This last admission, moreover, is of just the kind that many of the critics of religion would have wanted me to make. Precisely, they will say, religion is largely a matter of faith, and this they consider to be best defined by the statement of the little Sunday-school boy who, in answer to the teacher's question, "What is faith?" replied: "Faith is believ'n' what you know ain't so." In the admission of the part which faith plays in religion lies the best proof, we will be

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

told, that religion is exclusively emotional and not subject to rational criteria or criticism.

Once again, however, if I am any judge, the critics have overshot their mark. In voicing their objection they are guilty either (1) of an unwarranted generalization, that is to say, of arriving at a general conclusion by considering some instances and ignoring negative cases, or (2) of a sad confusion between credulity and faith or (3) of a misapprehension of the basic foundations of the sciences themselves.

On the first of these three points, let it be admitted that a great deal of what goes by the name religion is not much more than ignorant, blind, even stupid credulity. Undoubtedly, the critics have seen so much of this sort of thing that they have felt justified in charging religion as such with being credulous. Nevertheless, that generalization must be said to be based on insufficient evidence. No matter if credulity may widely characterize the so-called religion of many people, it remains as unfair to lay this to the *essence* of religion as it would be unfair to charge up against science all the foolish claims made in its behalf. If I want to know the nature of science and of scientific method, I do not go to the scientific quack or even to the average scientifically minded man. I go to a first-rate scientist. If I did otherwise I should lay myself open to the criticism of drawing unfair conclusions

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

from not merely insufficient but mostly worthless evidence. Why cannot the critics of religion, who claim to be so scientific, exhibit a little more careful intellectual method? Why must they constantly choose their examples from the lowest and worst, instead of from the highest and best expressions of religion?³ No conclusions drawn from the evidences of religious life which completely omit every consideration of religion at its best should be given serious consideration by really thoughtful men.

The second of the possibilities is equally as culpable. Critics who—whether intentionally or unintentionally—fail to distinguish between credulity and faith do not deserve being heard. No rational mind would care to defend blind superstition and credulity. On the other hand, to lump everything which is not capable of being scientifically demonstrated or verified together into one heap and then to name the aggregate “credulity” or “superstition” is unscientific. It is jumping to unwarranted conclusions from insufficient and specially selected evidence. Religion truly *is* largely a matter of faith. So are love and banking, air travel and breakfast eating; so are marriage and check writing, an ocean voyage and an elopement. So, in fact, are nine-tenths of our daily human relationships in any

³ In this connection the recent utterance of Dr. Henry Hitt Crane is noteworthy: “It is not secularism, but bad religion which is the greatest enemy of an ethically vital religion today.”

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

modern civilized country. It is not merely figuratively, it is *literally* true that "we live by faith." Let one simple concrete illustration suffice.

Imagine what would happen if, instead of partaking of breakfast by faith, we insisted on being scientific about it! It would be insufficient to go out into the kitchen and watch the final preparations for the meal. The kitchen gives only the finishing touches to the food. We should have to trace the bread to the bakery's truck driver and beyond him to the bakery itself. We should have to follow it farther back to the place where the wheat became flour in the mill. Nor could we stop there. Beyond the mill we should have to do research in respect to the farm on which the wheat was grown and harvested. All along that line of investigation we should have to analyze the fundamental honesty of the multitude of different men involved in these processes—from the farmer and harvesting helpers to the cook who finally toasts the bread. Nor, if like myself you require coffee for your breakfast, could our scientific investigation be completed in the United States. We might have to go to Nicaragua, Brazil or to the islands of the sea. By the time we had no more than begun to carry out our scientific breakfast research, we should be corpses and not need breakfasts, unless, indeed, we were willing in the meantime to have faith in those persons and processes that

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

are involved in giving us the things we might inconsistently eat for lunch or dinner. The point is obvious enough. We constantly live by faith rather than by knowledge. Yet it does not seem to have entered the heads of our religious critics to accuse all of us of being unintelligent and irrational just because we do not every morning set out to analyze our breakfast scientifically. There is no way of escaping the fact that the very cement which holds human relations together, at every level of our life and interests, is faith. Not faith, therefore, but *lack* of faith is irrational!

Yet we must keep in mind the distinction between faith and credulity. The faith upon which we are acting in all the multitudinous relationships of everyday life is rational just because it is not blind nor unreasonable. We have eaten breakfast many times without making our own scientific investigations and without being poisoned. In other words, in this realm we are acting, for the most part, on the evidence of past experience, whether it be our own or that of our fellows. So it is with religious faith. Partly, and very significantly, it is based on the past experience of other religious believers and doers. Partly, and perhaps even more significantly, it is based on the very reasonableness of our own creative constructions and idealizations. I say: upon the *reasonableness* of our ideal creations! This is important. "Faith" which is con-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

trary to reason is not faith, it is either credulous superstition or unbridled imagination. On the other hand, "faith" which is built upon demonstrable and verifiable scientific knowledge also is not faith but knowledge. In order to have any valid claim upon rational, moral, spiritual creatures, faith, even *religious* faith, must be *rationally grounded*, though *not* scientifically demonstrated. No man has a right to believe what he knows not to be true. Not even God, if He be rational and moral, can expect a rational being to believe what goes contrary to that rational being's best reflective judgment. In fact, "the first demand which a reasonable God will make upon a reasonable devotee is that he be reasonable."⁴

Ethical religion is built on faith—faith in man, in one's self, in the universe, in God. The faith of an ethical religion, though neither demonstrable by science nor *provable* by reason, is built on rational reflection and creation. Religion does go beyond science and beyond the demonstrations of reason; religion cannot be expressed in an equation nor captured in a syllogism; but it dare not go contrary to the workings of reason, if *rational* men are to be religious. We may have faith in many things which are not yet; in fact, if we are ethically religious, we *must* have such faith. But those unrealized goals in which we have faith

⁴ A. E. Avey, *Re-Thinking Religion*, p. 174.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

must themselves be the result of the imaginative construction of a rationally reflective mind, and not be the phantasms cast up by thoughtless hopes. The ideal cause, thus having been constructed by rational reflection and moral and spiritual aspiration, I see no good reason why our lives should not manifest some enthusiasm over this newly created object of our commitment, devotion and loyalty; such a cause deserves the affection of our hearts as well as the allegiance of our minds. Emotion in itself is morally neutral: in itself it is neither good nor bad. It is that with which emotions are linked which makes them subject to praise or blame. To harness our emotions to the finest, best, and noblest thoughts, deeds, hopes and ideals—this is the task of every truly rational and moral son of man.

Now, in respect to the third possible error of the critics of religion, I may be brief. I see no justification for the feeling that since religion is largely a matter of faith it is irrational and unintelligent. I have suggested, however, that such a view may be due to a misapprehension of the nature of the foundations of the sciences themselves. Science itself is ultimately grounded on faith rather than on knowledge. No science can even take its first steps of analysis without assuming a universe of order. This assumption is axiomatic for every natural science (even Heisenberg's principle of inde-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

terminacy cannot be used to prove the opposite). Yet this axiom is an axiom just because it is not itself subject to demonstration. In other words, the orderliness of the universe, which is the *sine qua non* of all scientific endeavor, is *a matter of faith*, not a matter of scientific demonstration. The only way in which this basic assumption of all sciences could possibly be verified is for the scientist engaged in the process of verification to be beyond all space and time and to look upon the universe from the perspective of omniscience. This, obviously, is impossible. Inasmuch as every scientist who cares for his reputation is well acquainted with this fact, it is strange, to say the least, that anyone who wants to be scientific should wish to throw out religion because it is largely a matter of faith. It is not faith, *qua* faith, that is irrational; without faith we could never exist or know anything. It is what we have faith *in* which may or may not be rational. Faith itself is a necessary human response; but that in which we put our faith should be able to bear the closest and most careful scrutiny. This is true in science as much as it is in religion. Credulity has sometimes spoiled the records of science even as it has those of religion.

There may be such things as unethical religions in the world, for all I know. There are plenty of "religious" people whose religion cannot be called ethical by any stretch of the imagination. Yet the way to a

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

hasty generalization is barred by a fact of great significance: the religion of Jesus of Nazareth was an ethical religion. Its commitments were ethical commitments, its loyalties ethical loyalties, its faith a moral faith. There can be no morality, in the true sense of that word, which is not rationally grounded. The deeply ethical religion of Jesus was, therefore, a reasonable thing. There is nothing in the Sermon on the Mount which insults a man's intelligence, nothing in the declaration at Nazareth which does not commend itself to a reflective intelligence, nothing in the faith practiced by the Galilean which savors of superstitious credulity. It was a faith in God, true; but no less a faith in man. It was a commitment, not to something static, definite, historical, demonstrable and known, but to a dynamic, indefinite, future, indemonstrable and unknown quantity, to the ideal humanity that was to be. In this ideal of a redeemed society the Nazarene placed his faith, to it he gave his loyalty, to its establishment he was committed and to its realization he gave the best he had and all he had: himself, his life, his death. Was that irrational, unintelligent? Utopian perhaps, yes. But who would not rather be utopian than futilitarian? After all, is there any *lesser* commitment, any lesser loyalty, any lesser faith which would be *more* rational? I, for one, know of none. Such was the religion, the faith of Jesus. Such *should be our*

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

Christian faith, our loyalty, our commitment, our religion.

As we have seen abundantly, historical Christianity has by no means always been either this kind of rational faith or this kind of moral commitment. This is merely another way of saying that the religion of Jesus has all too rarely been the devotion of the church. It is with this thought in mind that Albert Schweitzer incisively points out:

Christianity has need of thought that it may come to the consciousness of its real self. For centuries it treasured the great commandment of love and mercy as traditional truth without recognizing it as a reason for opposing slavery, witch-burning, torture, and all the other ancient and medieval forms of inhumanity. It was only when it experienced the influence of the thinking of the Age of Enlightenment that it was stirred into entering the struggle for humanity. The remembrance of this ought to preserve it forever from assuming any air of superiority in comparison with Thought.⁵

All ethical religion represents, in fact, the desire of men to actualize an ideal. In the world of human chaos which confronts us today, could anything be *more* rational than such religion?

Moreover, if the desire for and commitment to the actualization of an ideal—of ideal individuals as well as an ideal human society—constitute the essential nature of ethical religion, and if such desire and dedica-

⁵ Albert Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, p. 275.

CAN WE BE RELIGIOUS AND INTELLIGENT?

tion are themselves the outcome of rational reflection and creative construction, then, obviously, religion and reason are not antithetical; indeed, they are supplementary; they are part and parcel of each other; in sober truth, neither can reach its worthiest form without the other. In a classic passage, the ethically religious person has been instructed to be ever able to give "reason for the faith that is within him"; his faith is to be reasonable, that is to say, it is to be the result not only of his deepest commitment but also of his best rationally reflective judgment. At the same time, a reason or intelligence which is not committed to a great cause or is not loyal to a progressively creative ideal is more likely to be harmful and dangerous than not. Remember Loeb and Leopold. Their "intelligence quotient" was high enough; yet their commitments were of the lowest. Intelligence alone is not enough. Least of all in such a day as ours! To have intelligence without spiritual commitment is to fail at the point where our lives must count for the most, namely, in building that High City of God wherein man may progressively achieve the ideal human society. To have religion without reason, on the other hand, is to be satisfied with a groveling commitment to a static instead of a dynamic ideal and to a conception of life and of the universe which is less than intelligent. Neither of these, alone, can ever satisfy any man who

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

knows himself to be rational because he is a son of God, and who is determined to be moral because otherwise he fails to avail himself of his spiritual birthright.

Can we, then, be religious and intelligent at the same time? Let me suggest as my final answer to this question this challenge: Dare we ever be less than *both* at *any* time?

Or let the great Albert Schweitzer put this challenge to us in positive form:

"If men can be found who revolt against the spirit of thoughtlessness and who are personalities sound enough and profound enough to let the ideals of ethical progress radiate from them as a force, there will start an activity of the spirit which will be strong enough to evoke a new mental and spiritual disposition in mankind.⁶

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

VI

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND OUR GOD?

*Must we forever scorn our neighbor's gods,
When all our various divinities
Are common-born of the same stuff as dreams?*

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

IN THE preceding five chapters we have been concerned with the ways of being Christian in the focal relationships of life in our contemporary world. To the author these are the "weightier matters of the law."

At the same time, it would be folly to assume that the conception of God does not play a decisive role in any religion. There can be no doubting the fact that one of the most powerful of religious beliefs is belief in God. The kind of God in which a man has faith may make a great difference in his life.

It would, however, be equally fallacious to suppose that the concept of God in any specific religion is so clearly stated and so generally accepted that one need merely take the formulation in order to know and understand its peculiar meaning and significance. Few things, in fact, could be farther from the truth than

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

such a supposition. Even within Christianity it cannot be said that there is such a thing as a generally agreed upon concept of God. Indeed, the increasing popularity of discussions about God in the occidental world within recent years has brought to light so many *different* kinds of interpretations, all written from a supposedly Christian point of view, that the total effect—so far from being conducive to understanding—is one of great confusion. A careful perusal of the wealth of material on this subject which has recently poured from American and European presses has practically forced the thoughtful Christian to raise the question: *How is it possible for perfectly honest and reverent men to know so many different and often contradictory things about God?*

A rather careful answer to this inevitable question is prerequisite to a critical development of the subject of this chapter. It is, in the long run, fruitless to attempt to deal with issues of God's immanence, transcendence, or any other supposed divine attributes until we have first made clear to ourselves the peculiar nature of the problems involved in treating the concept of God at all.

As I see it, a major source of confusion in dealing with this crucial concept is to be found in the fact that even theologians and philosophers of religion have too often failed clearly to distinguish the fundamental

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

differences between empirical knowledge, religious faith and metaphysical speculation. These very different things have all been hopelessly mixed in most treatises on God. Most authors on the subject have not considered it at all necessary to warn their readers which of these "cognitive" approaches they expected to use in their respective treatments, nor have they regarded it as incumbent upon themselves to specify the exact status of their results. In fact, many writers have used all three, and left their conclusions in the haze that might well be expected. Obviously, nothing but confusion can come out of such careless procedure. If the scientists of the last three centuries had dealt even with their most speculative and purely hypothetical concepts in similar vague fashion, we should still find ourselves in the Dark Ages. It is no wonder, therefore, that much writing about God finds little heed among the more careful thinkers of our day. It is, after all, generally recognized that results obtained by such careless procedure can, at best, reveal only idiosyncratic *opinions*, and cannot, therefore, claim the respect of thoughtful men.

For purposes of clarifying the problem let me state, in a single sentence, the proposition which I desire to defend in the first half of this chapter:

God is an object of religious faith, and He may also be required as an hypothesis of metaphysical specula-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

tion, but He is not an object of empirical knowledge.

The study of religion as an empirical fact is both possible and necessary. The application of the scientific method to the analysis of religious phenomena, *qua* phenomena, is wholly laudable. This admission is not to be taken as a mere concession to the spirit of our age. Rather, within the limits of its possibility such procedure is essential if observations made in the field of religion are to be validated to rational minds. Since religion is a fact of human experience, it must yield to empirical methods of investigation. Even the psychological *fact* of faith as well as the *act* of faith become, thus, truly objects of scientific research. In this sense the psychology of religion may be as "objective"¹ and as empirical as any other area of psychology.

It should, however, be equally obvious that the "divine object" of religious faith is not subject to such methods of treatment. For, by initial definition, the object of religious faith in the case of the concept of God is something intended to transcend experience. The assertion of the immanence of God in man cannot alter this fact. The immanence of God in man is, after all, claimed not as a datum of directly analyzable

¹ That the aim of a "pure" or "absolute" "objectivity" is a hopeless quest in both philosophy and science, I have already argued elsewhere in detail. Cf. my articles on "Is 'Standpointless Philosophy' Possible?" (*The Philosophical Review*, XLIV, pp. 227-253), and on "The Possibilities and Limitations of Natural Science" (*College of the Pacific Publications in Philosophy*, III, 1934, pp. 29-47).

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?
and scientifically verifiable experience, but as a declaration of religious *faith*, as part of the possessed faith in God.

It should certainly be clear that faith and scientifically verifiable knowledge are not identical. So far from being synonymous, each of the terms has a distinct meaning. The fact, brought out in Chapter V, that even science in its ultimate foundations is based upon faith does not alter the real and significant distinction between faith and scientifically verifiable knowledge. As we have already pointed out, faith is *not* a matter either of scientific demonstration or of logical proof. Empirical *knowledge*, on the other hand, once its fundamental assumptions are accepted, is capable of validation—of a confirmation that will satisfy any observer who will trouble himself to make the examination. That there is much more to be said about the precise nature of empirical knowledge goes without saying. For present purposes, however, it will be quite sufficient to employ the term in the established sense in which every natural scientist uses it. According to this usage, knowledge can only be had in a field which will yield to investigation by the exercise of our senses (aided, perhaps, by scientific instruments) and of our equipment for rational analysis and synthesis; and, in this field, prediction must be possible so that verification have specifiable meaning.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

I am well aware that it has often been claimed that God, too, is an empirical fact, since He is experienced by man, and that even science itself can check and verify the differences brought about in actual human living by the experience of God within a man's soul. Such a claim, however, furnishes merely one more concrete example of the mental confusion of people who make such assertions. Not that I would deny the empirically obvious and verifiable changes brought about in human life by religion. It is one thing, however, to admit such change and to grant that it is due to religious influences or even to faith in God. It is, on the other hand, a quite different matter to claim that the God who is thus appropriated by religious faith is Himself an object of empirical analysis and of verifiable knowledge. This latter claim can, manifestly, not be substantiated. The observed change in the direction of a man's life may indeed be said to prove his faith in a certain kind of God, but it cannot prove either the actual existence of that God or anything about His nature. God Himself, in other words, has in no sense thereby been brought within the realm of empirically verifiable knowledge. Faith still remains faith. To grant that God is an object of religious faith is by no means a justification for assuming that He is an object of empirical knowledge.

As soon as this is granted one feels quite confounded

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

by the large number of things which various theologians seem to claim to *know* about God. Yet it is little wonder that their assertions concerning God differ so widely and often so fundamentally. For, since God Himself is not an object of knowledge, all that men have asserted of His attributes and functions is outside the area of empirical knowledge. So far as "sensible" knowledge² of God's "real" character is concerned, therefore, one man's guess would appear to be as good as another's. Such recognition, however, does not disqualify one's right—even one's rational right—to exercise one's faith either in the direction of belief in God's existence or in that of attributing to Him the characteristics which one's commitment requires.

To insist, on the other hand, that such acts of faith are themselves empirical knowledge is disastrous to intelligent use of language. The absurdity of such claims becomes all the more pronounced when one views the multitudinous and widely varying portraits of God, all supposedly the result of knowledge. Is it any wonder that the world is still so generally questioning the intellectual integrity of religious leaders and thinkers? We cannot, after all, command the respect of rational men nor even preserve our own intellectual self-respect so long as we glibly proceed to make careless claims to knowledge in realms in which empirical knowledge, in

² In the Kantian sense of the term.

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

any significant sense of the word, simply is not and cannot be possible.

For I am willing to go further than assert merely that we have no empirically verifiable knowledge of God. Such knowledge is, in the very nature of the case, forever impossible for the finite mind of man. If God be God—that is to say, if He be sufficiently far beyond the definite reach of our finite experience that He can be called God in the sense in which man has always thought of God—then He is outside the possibility of being grasped by sense-knowledge or “explained” or delineated by deductive reason. *Knowledge* of God becomes, therefore, forever impossible. .

In the light of these considerations it certainly is strange that, generation after generation, men should so confidently assert things about God’s attributes and functions. Nor has such thinking and writing ever been so strange and unreal as it is today; today, when most of the considerations just mentioned have become commonplace with almost all thinking people.

At the point of metaphysical speculation concerning the concept of God, our problem is not fundamentally different. Metaphysical speculations about God may be justifiable, rational and even necessary. Even when this is the case to the highest degree, however, they are still metaphysical speculations and not empirical and scientifically verifiable knowledge. It may be true, for ex-

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

ample, that God must meet an inevitable demand of the moral consciousness of man, as Kant argued a hundred and fifty years ago. It may, furthermore, be true that God is required from certain—quite rational—points of view to meet the legitimate demands of speculative reason, as for example, in the demand for a purposeful and creative rational Mind at the heart of the universe. This, nevertheless, does not make God an object of empirical or scientific knowledge. Metaphysical speculation, no matter how justifiable, rational or even necessary, is not and, as such, never can be identical with scientifically verifiable knowledge.

Any attempt to obliterate or disregard the basic difference between knowledge and speculation only helps to foster the already existing mental confusion. Nor is it possible to escape the distinction by having recourse to the increasingly popular claim that physical science itself, under the leadership of such men as Eddington, Jeans and Millikan is becoming daily more "idealistic" and less "realistic." Anyone who has first-hand knowledge of both science and philosophy knows that such claims are mostly nonsense. That, within the first two-fifths of the twentieth century, there has taken place a very significant change of intellectual front among the leaders of physical science everyone will admit. It is not possible, however, to interpret this change of front as a surrender of the relative adequacy of scientific

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

methods of measurement in the realms where those procedures are found to be as valid as any methods yet discovered. It is both foolish and dangerous to surrender our intellectual integrity at this point for the sake of desiring to win a momentary skirmish; the final debacle would be all the more devastating. Scientific verifiability and predictability are still meaningful terms for the physical scientist. More than that, these terms still largely constitute the goal of the natural sciences. The contemporary admission that, even from such scientifically verifiable and predictable data, the mind of the scientist (of the observer, that is to say) cannot be eliminated is, indeed, an important and far-reaching admission, but it in no wise justifies any attempted identification of empirical knowledge and metaphysical speculation.

Nothing of what has been said, however, need be construed as containing any argument against either the validity or justifiability of religious faith or of metaphysical speculation. Rather, I should admit at once that man cannot avoid engaging in metaphysical speculations, the "logical positivists" to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor can I see any good reason why man should stop such speculations even if he could. It is, however, of the greatest importance that he should be as critical of his metaphysical speculations as his rational powers and growing knowledge permit. To do

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

less than this would indeed make his speculations "idle" instead of in the best sense metaphysical. If the metaphysician will keep his speculations under constant, careful, critical scrutiny he will never fall victim to the temptation of becoming forgetful of what it is he is doing. Let him, moreover, be frank with his readers and hearers by openly admitting what he is about. Above all, let him refrain from making any claims for the results of his speculations which critical analysis could not possibly substantiate.

These principles apply also to religious faith. The fact that religious faith is not equivalent to scientifically verifiable knowledge offers no valid reason for attempting to push it aside as meaningless or as unworthy of rational minds. The meaning and significance of religious faith lie in what it is, not in what it is not. To try to make knowledge out of religious faith is to violate not merely its peculiar place in the life of man, but to invalidate it in its major purpose and objective. Religion, in other words, would cease to be the powerful dynamic of life if it should come to rest on verifiable knowledge instead of resting on faith. Faith is still "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." This hopeful assurance and conviction concerning the unseen is still one of man's most sublime capacities, as we have already seen in previous chapters. It is by faith that man progressively constructs and creates those ideals

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

which most uniquely constitute the prerequisite for the possibility of individual and social progress. The transforming power of such faith and the renewing power of such conviction concerning the unseen and the unrealized have been too often experienced to be set aside as unreal. None the less, even such faith is still faith, not knowledge. And God, as the most divine object of such faith, is still the creation of faith and not the object of empirical knowledge.

The fact of the matter is that the dynamic of religion lies precisely in its adventurous character. Take adventure out of ethical religion and you kill it. Empirical knowledge of what is, is prosaic and cold in comparison with faith in what might be, what one is convinced should be and what one holds as worthy of full measure of devotion in order that it shall be. Empirical knowledge may arouse interest. Such faith, on the other hand, will arouse enthusiasm, courage, daring, devotion. Even the natural scientist becomes enthusiastic over what he believes he may some day find or achieve; whereas he takes the results of the already uncovered knowledge quite largely and coolly for granted.

There is nothing lost, therefore, in the insistence that God, in any rationally justifiable view, is an object of faith and of metaphysical speculation, but is not an object of empirical or scientifically verifiable

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

knowledge. Donald Hankey, during the World War, caught the point in his well-known remark: "Religion is betting your life there is a God." Betting—even among thieves, however—would not be honorable on any subject concerning which any of the parties already had knowledge. But staking one's life on what, in the final analysis, is beyond the possibility of empirical knowledge or of scientific demonstration—this puts zest into life and changes the humdrum of daily routine into a magnificent adventure.

Indeed, a God discoverable at the end of a telescope would be religiously valueless to man. So would be a God *measurable* by the yardsticks of the psychologist or even the axiologist. The God Who will ever entice man and spur him on to greater deeds and nobler achievements of living is the God Who, although by faith claimed to be within man, is at the same time always infinitely beyond him, worthy of all the admiration, reverence and adoration of which finite man is capable. Such a God is within and beyond, immanent and transcendent; but it is as an object of faith that He is both—never as an object of empirical, verifiable knowledge.

If theologians and philosophers of religion could at last learn to realize this truth and as the result of such realization become more humble in their statements about God, we might cease to "know" so

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

many things about God, but we could be richly compensated for the loss of such varied and dubious "knowledge" by a new daring and adventurous faith in Him.

Having thus cleared the ground by dealing with the problem of whether or not God can legitimately be said to be "known," we are now ready to take up the more specific question set in the title of this chapter. Most readers of theological literature are aware of the fact that there have been raised, in our day, insistent voices which have not merely stressed the transcendent element in the Christian concept of God, but which so demand the doctrine of the divine transcendence as practically to exclude every other attribute of the Deity. Two Central European theologians, Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, are, without question, the major initiators of this recent emphasis in Christian theology.

The reader will recall that I myself have already granted that a certain transcendent character must be admitted for God, if the word God is to have any universally recognizable meaning—that is to say, if we are to mean by the term anything which can remain in line with the development of the idea of God in those religions which have such a concept. It is to be granted, in other words, that, if God is to be God to man, if He is to be held worthy of worship and adoration, He must in a significant sense be held to transcend

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

the boundaries of finite human experience. This demand would seem to be wholly legitimate. (Be it noted, however, that in this proposition I am staying entirely by the requirements I laid down in the first half of this chapter: I am *not* asserting divine transcendence as something to be empirically demonstrated or scientifically proved, but merely as a rationally justifiable demand to be made of the concept of God, if by it we are to intend anything at all in conformity with the practically universal usage of the word.)

Such admission of the element of transcendence, however, is far from satisfactory to the advocates of the "theology of crisis" and their followers. It is their contention that God must be not only transcendent, but exclusively so. More than that, they insist that the majesty and infinite power of God—which are the divine attributes *par excellence* in Barthianism—can be safeguarded only upon the presumption that God is so completely beyond man and beyond every possible human conception that He can be characterized rightly only as "wholly Other." God, on that view, is everything that man is not. God is everything that man cannot think, and He is *nothing* that man *can* think.

From a logical point of view, of course, such a position is self-destructive because self-contradictory. If God is everything that man cannot think, and He is nothing that man *can* think, then His nature cannot be thought

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

at all. To which our thoroughgoing Barthians will likely offer two replies. In the first place, they may say, logic is itself only a human tool and can, therefore, in no sense be applied to considerations concerning God. Secondly, they can tell us, the "theology of crisis" is quite in agreement with our logical deduction: Mere man cannot begin to think the divine attributes or nature. This, so they aver, is precisely the essence of their claim for the "wholly Other-ness" of God. All that man can do is to stand in absolute awe, reverence and obedience before the inconceivable divine majesty and power. As Kant insisted that nothing could be "known" about "things-in-themselves," so the Barthians insist that man can know nothing about and ascribe nothing to God, except the fact that He is "wholly Other."

There are two rejoinders to be made to this doctrine. In the first place, anyone who really believes this should give up talking about God altogether. It is certainly not easy to see how you can intelligently *talk* about God, if there is nothing positive you can *think* about Him. That is to say, if God is so "wholly Other" that no human terminology can be applied to Him, the only reasonable way of dealing with Him is not to mention Him. If nothing humanly significant can be said about Him, even to allude to Him becomes futile.

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

In that case He is not only "unknowable" but also "unmentionable."

It is the second necessary rejoinder to the Barthian doctrine, however, which is of primary interest to us here. If the "theology of crisis" is correct in its doctrine of God, then—whatever other justification there may be for such a concept of the Deity—God can be of *no possible religious or spiritual value to man*. The God of religion must be a Being Who is sufficiently like us to make spiritual relations between Him and ourselves conceivable. Man cannot reasonably worship that which he cannot in any sense of the word understand. We have granted that, in order for man to be able to worship God, God must be sufficiently *beyond* man, at any rate in goodness¹ and moral character, to make such worshipful reverence intrinsically appropriate. As soon, however, as God is so completely removed from anything that man can "think or understand," intelligent worship becomes as impossible as it would be if God were pictured on a low moral and spiritual plane. It is unreasonable to expect man to worship that which is in every sense of the word "wholly beyond" him. The best proof of this fact lies, of course, in the history of religions themselves. The great ethnic religions, including not only Buddhism and Islam, but also Judaism and Christianity, have proceeded to deify or nearly to deify some historical person or persons, or have, at

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

any rate, proceeded to accept the revelations of some historical figures as final. The reason for this is clear. Men can appreciate and be responsive only to a God Who, somehow or other, comes to them in human or in humanly understandable terms. A wholly transcendent God, a God said to be wholly beyond even the thought and imagination of man, may be a *word*, but He can, obviously, have no meaningful content for the finite human mind. And nothing meaningless can seriously be expected to serve as an object of worship for a rational creature. Whatever else a God Who is "wholly Other" may or may not be, therefore, He cannot be *our* God, if by "*our* God" be meant a Being Who can be worshiped by rational creatures and with Whom spiritual communion can be had.

Coming more particularly to the Christian God, it would seem to be obvious that the God Whom Jesus tried to bring to men under the concept of a "Divine Father" is very far from a wholly transcendent deity. The term "father" is a definitely *human* concept. Yet Jesus not only applied it to the God Whom he claimed to reveal, but seemed to indicate that, of any descriptive name which he might use, this term came the nearest to suggesting what he meant by God. Karl Barth and his followers may be worried about the application of human concepts to their God; Jesus shows no evidence of having been thus troubled. So far from trying to

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

remove God infinitely from men, Jesus went in the diametrically opposite direction: he tried to bring God close to men, to reveal God to men in the simplest and clearest humanly understandable terms. Accordingly, however else we may or may not characterize the Barthian theology, the adjective "Christian" can hardly rightfully be applied to it. Jesus goes one way in delineating God; Karl Barth goes the other way. Jesus tries to get men to understand the divine nature; Barth tells men that God is forever entirely beyond their finite comprehension. It does not seem possible to think of a reconciliation of views so basically different.

At the same time it must be admitted that there are, of course, several reasons for the direction which the "theology of crisis" has taken in respect to the concept of God. The first of these must be sought in the fact that, under the increasingly popular doctrine of God as a kind, loving, merciful, forgiving Father, men had come to look upon Him as an easygoing indulgent deity. Barth and his disciples—including in America particularly the theologian Edwin Lewis—reacted violently against this extremely anthropomorphic tendency, in which they felt that the all-just, all-righteous God had been dragged down to little more than a very powerful but indulgent man. They revolted rightly against the concept of God as an overgrown man. It is easy to understand and to sympathize with

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

such reaction. If God be God, there is a sense in which His majesty, justice, righteousness, and even His transcendence, cannot be overstressed. It does need to be called to our minds that when we belittle Him by taking away necessary divine attributes,³ we merely fool ourselves. For its insistence upon this emphasis we may be grateful to the "theology of crisis." That this corrective has been bought by these theologians at entirely too great a cost—too great, that is to say, in terms of the correspondent loss of religious and spiritual significance—this also seems clear.

Another reason for the direction which Barthian theology has taken is connected with the problem which concerned us throughout the first half of this chapter. The recognition on the part of these thinkers of the impossibility of having empirically verifiable "knowledge" about God, probably had much to do with their insistent demand that He be forever put beyond the pale of such attempts by the finite minds of men. Here again, the source of the motivation was undoubtedly valid, but the result must be assessed as spiritually disastrous.

There is one more reason which must be mentioned if we would understand the background and basic motivations of the Barthian movement. We should

³ Whatever such attributes may be. Their "necessity" obviously can consist only of such need as the rational or moral consciousness of man may demand.

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

appear willfully blind to the obvious facts of the case if we were to ignore the social, economic and political situation out of which the tendency has come. Four years of World War, with Germany at the center of it and surrounded by enemies more numerous than could well be counted! The Treaty of Versailles, and all that it meant for the Germans, not only economically and materially but psychologically and spiritually, with the "war guilt" lie rancoring in their hearts! The loss of German territories after the War! The occupation of the Ruhr! The German inflation! And so forth, one blow falling after the other. It was in such a situation that the Barthian movement had its birth. No wonder it has taken on the name, "the theology of crisis"! It was a theology which was not only born in crisis, but which developed in a world of successive crises. It bears, therefore, the marks of crisis both on its face and all over it. It is a transcendental theology largely because it has lost all hope in man and sees him merely as a helpless, hopeless, defeated and worthless creature. Help can come only from beyond. There is nothing that man can do for himself. The longer man tries to extricate himself out of the moral, social, economic, political and spiritual morass, the deeper he digs himself into the mire. Only a power completely divorced from all this earthliness, only a wholly transcendent God, can reach in—from the outside—with

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

redemptive action. Human crisis is met by a theology of crisis! Social crises can be resolved only by supernatural intervention! It takes the apocalyptic appearance of an "wholly Other God" to bring the otherwise insoluble problems of this sinful old world to a lasting solution. Here, I think, lies the real and ultimate reason for the appearance of the theology of Karl Barth. It is the expression of an age—an age which not only has grown tired of problems, but has also wearied of man and his pathetically slow movements toward progress; an age which has lost confidence in itself and in any natural means of finding a way of deliverance; an age which can see hope for salvation only through the catastrophic interference of supernatural power.

As one looks at these reasons for the Barthian movement, one can at least come to an understanding of a theological tendency which, from any merely rational point of view, is not only incomprehensible but actually a return to the otherworldly theologies of the Middle Ages. To understand, however, does not mean to condone. If humanity, since 1914, has entered another "dark age" in its economic, social, political, international and interracial life, that fact hardly offers justification for religion to do likewise. Indeed, it is just when other areas of human life surrender to the spirit of defeat and despair and when mankind seems to be going back to barbarism, if not savagery—it is in such

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

a day that one should expect religion to be the saving element in the situation, *not* by introducing magical help from the outside, but by gathering together all the potential moral forces inherent in man and putting them in a relation of active coöperation with whatever other spiritual forces there may be redemptively at work in the universe. In other words, for man to capitulate in the face of overwhelming obstacles and difficulties and blithely to hand the task of doing something about them over to a transcendent God—this, so far from being ethical religion, appears to me to smack essentially of magic.

Ethical religion does not run away from a task, no matter how difficult, nor from an obstacle, no matter how insuperable. Ethical religion realizes that most of the difficulties in which man is involved have been man-made and are, for that very reason, also capable of being met and overcome by man. This is far from saying that ethical religion bows God out of His world. Not at all. It merely says that ethical religion concerns itself primarily with human problems. It means that ethical religion has too much respect for both God and man than simply to hand our difficulties over to "the Almighty." Too much respect for God, in that it refuses to make of God our celestial handyman, who is to run our errands for us when we ourselves are either too lazy or too weak to take care of them our-

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

selves. Too much respect for man, in that it refuses to acknowledge humanity itself defeated or helpless just because it has got itself into a bad way. Ethical religion holds that the salvation of man, at any point, is first of all a human task and that, unless man himself will work on that task, it will never be accomplished. It also holds that, in the process of working on his salvation, man can rely upon the aid of whatever spiritual forces there are at work in the universe. There is an ethical sense in which such a religionist does rely on God: as spiritual coworker in a common enterprise. And there is a sense in which this kind of religionist *never* relies on God, namely, to have God do the job for him. Ethical religion conceives of the relationship between God and man on an ethical plane, where spiritual understanding and mutual coöperation actively obtain, and where the necessary tasks are not shunted off to one party of a very one-sided affair.

With the exception of the definitely apocalyptic passages, such certainly seems to have been the religion of Jesus. Thus ethical also was his concept of God. The idea of the Divine Fatherhood is an ethical conception. And the relationship between Father and sons is an ethical relationship. *Our* God, therefore, the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" can never be conceived as an absentee landlord, a completely transcendent deity,

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?
a "wholly Other." *Our* God is man's spiritual comrade,
fatherly friend, ethical coworker.

This is one reason why, in the ethical religion of Jesus, God cannot be used as the absolute guaranty of the final outcome. The fact that God is on the side of moral progress should act as a great encouragement to all men who stand committed to ethical and spiritual ideals. Even God Himself, however, cannot, on a basically ethical and spiritual view, achieve moral victory without the active coöperation of men. For on an ethical interpretation of life even God cannot *use* men either against their own will or beyond their own understanding and free commitment. Such admission does not make life a gamble, but it does make it a great adventure. The final outcome depends as much upon man as upon any other spiritual forces in the universe. Together we may be able progressively to achieve worlds of incarnate ideals. Quite aside, however, from the question of ultimate outcome, ethical conduct and spiritual coöperation stand justified in their own right.

Faith, therefore, in an ethical God is not a blind trust that somehow or other God will accomplish what needs to be done. Rather it is the active commitment of individual moral agents to the same great cause and task to which an ethical God must be committed: the increasing achievement of ethical and spiritual personalities who with each other and with their God

THE QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS REALISM

will work on the creation of a moral community. That is why religious faith of this kind is not only faith in an ethical God, but also dedication to the cause of Humanity. For the cause of Humanity is also the cause of God. If, as John puts it, it is true that "He who says he loves God but hates his fellow man is a liar," it is just as true that he who says he has faith in God but has lost his faith in men is a traitor—a traitor, that is to say, to the cause of God which is the cause of man.

To a great task, therefore, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ calls us, to the same task to which St. Paul responded when he heard the Call from Macedonia: Come and help us! So today cries every nation, every race, every aspect of the life of man. Have faith! Faith in God, yes. But show that faith by your faith in man. Thus and thus only shall we build that Realm of God where all men will be brothers and wherein the dreams and visions of the great seers of mankind will progressively be realized in a new, redeemed, ennobled humanity.

CAN GOD BE "WHOLLY OTHER" AND *Our* GOD?

In silence where the move of consciousness
Is heard, despairing Minos, stricken, stands;
His tortured eyes attempting to behold
An olden promised Mansion in God's House—
To see whatever is beholdable
In thought, or vernal earth, or opal sky;
His ears, unhearing, straining to attune
To sound in rhythm inarticulate,
To hear that Voice which speaks in utter calm,
That calm he could not know while reason raged
Rebellious from the reign of raucous things.
Then clear above the clamor of revolt
Repressed, the Hearer unbewildered hears
A thought come in upon him like soft speech
Of distant thunder from a mountain peak,
Saying: "Be still, and know that I am God" . . .

Dawn breaks because it is too full of Heaven,
And spills its bliss upon a wakening world,
Where vernal lyric trees write down elate
Long shadows of the signature of God. . . .

Hail, then, Mankind; all hail! That nearing Shore
Is touched when it is sighted by the bold.
Rejoice! There we shall dwell, and serving reign!
Rejoice! the world awakes! Mind knows not Death
When Life is visioned as the thought of God,
The universe His realm, and Love His throne.

From *Lovers of Life*, by Edwards Davis

INDEX

-
- Abdication of Christianity when in conflict with the state, 75
 Abrams, Ray H., 76
 Abundant life, 126 ff.
 Academicians, closed-mindedness of, 11 f.
 Acquisition, competitive, 62
 Actualize an ideal, the nature of ethical religion is to, 162
 Addams, Jane, 87
 Adventure, to save a world, 130
 Allegiance, open-minded, 38 f.
 Anthropomorphic tendency in God concept, 193 f.
 Anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany, 83 f.
 Attitude, fundamental, 8, 52 f. n.
 Authority, two kinds of, 28 f.
 Avey, A. E., 99 f. n., 158

 Backward looking character of institutional religion, 141 ff.
 Bailey, William Louis, 126 f. n.
 Barth, Karl, 178, 182, 183, 186
 Barthian God concept of no religious value, 181 ff.
 Barthianism, 179 ff.; a throwback to theologies of Middle Ages, 186; the socio-politico-economic background of, 185 ff.
 Black lists, 87 f.
 Brunner, Emil, 178
 Bruno, Giordano, 133
 Buddhism, 181
 Business and religion, Ch. II

 Certainties in religion, 26
 Charity, 144 ff.
 Christianity, historical, 162
 Christmas, 82

Christ's Alternative to Communism, 101 f. n.
 Church councils (conferences), 134 f
 Church's unwillingness to be cleansed from within, 13
 Church-state controversy in Germany, 80-84
 Commitment, religious, Ch. I, esp. from p 12 on
 Compartmentalist view of religion, 45 ff.
 Competitive acquisition, 62
 Compromise, 37
 Confusion on God concept, 166 f., 171
 Constitution, American, 15
 Conviction, 7
 Crane, Henry Hitt, 155 f. n.
 Creating a self, 128 f.
 Creative character of religion, 67-70
 Credulity, distinction between faith and, 157 ff.
 Crisis, theology of, 179 ff.; reasons for, 185 f
 Crusade for a new world, 120 ff.

 Darwin, Charles, 133
 Davis, Edwards, vii, xv, 1, 5, 40, 70, 71, 91, 96, 97, 131, 165, 191
 Democracy in the U. S., 84 f.
 Denominational machinery, 134
 Dewey, John, 87
 Discrepancy between "good news" and existing state, 103 f. n.
 Divine fatherhood, 188 f.
 Drew, Daniel, 48 f.
 Dynamic process, religion as, 147 f., 161, 163, 176 f.

INDEX

- Economic life of America, a law unto itself, 40 ff
- Economics and religion, Ch. II
- Eddington, A. S., 173
- Eddy, Sherwood, 87
- Einstellung*, basic attitude, 6
- Emotion not limited to religion, 148 f.
- Emotional character of religion, 135 f., 148 ff.
- Emotional depth of patriotism and religion, 78
- Empirical knowledge, 169-174
- Ethical interpretation of life, 59 f.
- Ethical religion adventurous, 176 f.
- Ethical religion forward-looking, 142 f., 161-163
- Evolution, biological, 14 f. n. teaching of—illegal, 14
- Faith—and superstition, 24; as loyalty, 31 f.; in God, 170 ff., 189 f.; the nature of religious, 153-160; the validity of religious, 175 f.
- Faith for Today, A, 112
- Fatherhood of God, 182 ff., 188 ff.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 37
- Filene, Edward A., 65
- Fisk, Jim, 48 f.
- Flynn, John T., 48 f.
- Galileo, 133
- Gandhi, Mahatma, 56
- German, clergymen, 80-84
- God and Mammon, 60 f.
- God, as object of metaphysical speculation, 167 f., 172 f.; as object of religious faith, 167, 176 f, 189 f.; as purposive creator, 173; as spiritual co-worker, 188; as "wholly other," Ch. VI, esp. from p. 179 on; the conception of God, entire Ch. VI; concept of Barthians beyond finite comprehension, 183, not object of empirical knowledge, 168, 170, 172 f, 176 ff; not celestial handyman for ethical religion, 187, offers no absolute guarantee, 189
- God's Gold*, 48 f.
- Goebbels, General, 83 f.
- Gospel, the Christian, 98 ff; individual, 98 ff., 127; social, 98 ff, 127
- Gould, Jay, 48 f.
- Growth through use, 113 f.
- Haeckel, Ernst, 133
- Hankey, Donald, 177
- Happiness, by-product instead of goal, 57
- Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy, 159 f.
- Hitler, Adolf, 80
- Holy war, 76
- Humanity, achieving it, 128 f; as a cause, 29 ff; as the cause of God, 190
- Indifference of college students, the supposed religious, 132
- Individual salvation a by-product, not conscious aim, 112-114, 123 ff.
- Intelligence and religion, Ch. V
- Interference with business, governmental, 41 f.
- Irreconcilability of Christian God concept with Barthian, 182-183
- Islam, 181

INDEX

- Jeans, J. H., 173
 Jesus, 6, 13, 18 f., 27 f., 30 f., 34, 36, 38 f., 45, 52 f., 54 f., 56, 59, 88, 95, 97 f., 100 ff., 105 ff., 108 ff., 121 f., 123 ff., 126 f., 161 f., 182 f., 188 f.
 Jesus', commitment to the ideal humanity, 161; realism, 102; realistic interpretation of human nature, 53; religion an ethical religion, 161
 John, St., 88
 Johnson, Dr Samuel, 89, 95
 Jones, E. Stanley, 56, 100 ff., 107
 Judaism, 181

 Kagawa, Toyohiko, 56
 Kingdom of God, 30 f.
 Knowledge, empirical, 169-174
 (empirical) of God impossible, 172

 Lewis, Edwin, 183
 Lincoln, Abraham, 119
 Love of humanity, 143 ff.
Lovers of Life, vii, xv, 1, 5, 40, 70, 71, 91, 96, 97, 131, 165, 191
 Loving (honoring) individual men, 34 ff.
 Loving humanity in the abstract, 34 f.
 Luther, Martin, 13

 Magical character of Barthian theology, 187
 Mammon and God, 60 f.
 Markham, Edwin, 91
 McConnell, Francis J., 87
 Metaphysical speculation, validity of, 174 f.
 Millikan, Robert A., 173

 Missionary enterprise, the challenge of the, 114-117
 Missionary spirit, its secret, 107
 Money, attitude towards, 53 f.
 Monkey trial in Tennessee, 14
 Morality as creative construction, 143
 Morality rationally grounded, 161
 Motives of men in amassing wealth, 55 f.
 Mussolini, Benito, 80

 Narrow-mindedness, Ch. I, 90
 National Socialism, 81 ff.
 Nazareth, the sermon at, 100 ff., 126, 161
 Nazi brand of patriotism, 78-84
 Nero, 134
 New World, Christian Youth Building a, 120-122
 Niebuhr, Reinhold, 87
 Nye Senate inquiry into manufacture of armaments, 88

 Objectivity in science and philosophy, 168 f. n.
 Open-mindedness, entire Ch. I; loyalty to, 38, 52 f. n.; necessity for, 21; needed in facing paradox of patriotism and religion, 72; not self-evident, 7; when is it a virtue?, 72
 Otherworldly character of Christianity, 45
Our God, 188 ff.
Out of My Life and Thought, 131, 162, 164
 Oxford Conference on "The Church and State", 104 f.
 Oxnam, G. Bromley, 87

INDEX

- Page, Kirby, 87
- Paradoxes, Jesus aware of, 6
- Pasteur, Louis, 64
- Patriotism, and religion, Ch. III;
as a negative attitude, 74, 90
f., 94 f.; as commitment to
status quo, 90 ff.; one hun-
dred per cent, 89; positive,
92-94, 95; "last refuge of a
scoundrel," 89; Nazi brand
of, 78-84; tentative (etymo-
logical) definition of, 72;
watchdogs of, 87 f.
- Paul, St., 88
- Persecution, religious, 14 f.
- Personality, the spiritual signifi-
cance of individual, 59
- Politics, its place in religion, 43 f.
- Prayer, actual as against formal,
47 ff.
- Preachers Present Arms*, 76
- Primacy of spiritual life, 52
- Private business, its inability to
produce for public welfare, 58
- Profit motive, 61
- Progress, 147 f.
- Psychology of religion, 168
- Public welfare, the moral inabil-
ity of private business to pro-
duce for, 58
- Radhakrishnan, S., 34
- Rall, H. F., 112
- Rauschenbusch, Walter, 102
- Realism in religion, xiii
- Realistic, attitude, 3; implications of
salvation, 125 f.; outlook of
modern youth, 120 f.; treat-
ment of problem of individual
and social salvation, 127 f.
- Reason and religion, Ch. V
- Reflective reason as agency of con-
struction of religious ideals,
152 f.
- Reichs-Bischof* in Germany, 82 f.
- Religion, as an emotional drug,
150 ff.; as creative process, 67-
70; as escape, 101 f., 150;
becoming this-world-conscious,
44 f.; a flimsy foundation for,
23; studied as empirical fact,
168, the nature of ethical, 25,
141, 147 f., 152, 158, 161,
162, 187 ff.; preserver of the
economic *status quo*, 43 f.;
need for an understanding of
the nature of, 137 ff.; unthink-
able without emotion, 148 ff.
- Religious faith, validity of, 175 f.
- Religious history, esp pp. 13-17
- Religious institutions run on sound
economic principles, 50 f.
- Religious realism, xiii
- Resentment against the "holier
than thou" attitude, 33 f.
- Re-Thinking Religion*, 99 f. n., 158
- Retrospective character of institu-
tional religion, 141 ff.
- Revaluation, 63 ff.
- Sacred, 43 f.
- Safety, social and economic, vs. re-
ligious salvation, 123-128
- Salvation, Ch. IV; as bargaining
between God and man, 126;
the drama of, 45; from an un-
ethical social order, 126 f.,
positive Christian, 100 ff., 123-
130; escape mechanism,
throughout Ch. IV
- Save thyself, 106, 111
- Saving effect of saving others, 124 f.

INDEX

- Saving others, Jesus' practice, 108-111
- Schweitzer, Albert, 56, 131, 162, 164
- Science and religion, 15
- Science grounded on faith, 159 f.
- Scientific method applied to religious phenomena, 168
- Scientific verifiability and predictability, the meaningfulness of, 174
- Secular, 43 f.
- Self-preservation as the concern of the church, 107
- Sermon on the Mount, The, 28, 73, 161
- Service motive, 61
- Social sciences, prejudice against, 15
- Socrates, 56
- Soul, not gift but achievement, 67-70
- Spiritual axiom (principle), 108, 124
- Spiritual life, primacy of, 52
- "Spiritualizing" the gospel, 103
- Success, worldly, 61 f.
- Supernatural intervention an essential characteristic of Barthianism, 186
- Superpatriotic mentality, 86-89
- Tennessee, monkey-trial in, 14
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 24
- Theology of crisis, 179 ff.
- Tittle, Ernest Fremont, 87
- Transcendent nature of God, 178 ff., 182, 184 ff.
- Truth, the relativity of, 19 f.
- Unethical social order, salvation from an, 126 f.
- Values, truly human—priceless, 63
- Vital religion, 50
- Vocation of Man*, 37
- Wesley, John, 13, 69 f.
- World events, 1 f.
- Youth, its realistic outlook, 120 f.
the challenge of Christian, 116-122

